

PART II 1931-1939 Kuchwada

- (1) Osho's parents' marriage.
- (2) Unusual events while Osho is in his mother's womb.
- (3) 1931 Osho is born in the village of Kuchwada.
- (4) Osho's grandparents, Nani and Nana.
- (5) The family servant, Bhoora.
- (6) Osho argues with Nana's guru.
- (7) 1939 Death of Osho's grandfather, Nana.

PART II

Kuchwada

1931-1939

(1) Osho's parents' marriage

Hajji Baba of Pakistan, who is now* nearly one hundred and ten years old, was present at my father's marriage and he had come with the marriage party to my mother's place. It created a great stir in the whole Jaina community, because it is a tradition that when the bridegroom comes to the house of the bride they have to be received on the boundary of the town, and the chief of the family has to be garlanded. A turban, a very valuable turban, has to be put on his head, beautiful shoes made of velvet have to be put on his feet and he is given a robe, specially made for him.

My (paternal) grandfather said, "Hajji Baba is the chief of our family." Now, a Mohammedan, chief of the family of a Jaina...my mother's father was at a loss--what to do? Hajji Baba was saying, "Don't do this." But my grandfather was never able to listen to anybody. He said, "It doesn't matter. Even if we have to go back, we will go back, but you are my family's chief I have always been like your younger brother, and how can I be received when you are here?"

There was no other way; my mother's father had to receive Hajji Baba as the chief of the family. *misery05*

*Note: 1985

In the past there were children married before they were ten. Sometimes children were even married when they were still in their mother's womb. Just two friends will decide that, "As our wives are pregnant, if one gives birth to a boy and the other gives birth to a girl, then the

marriage is settled, promised." The question of asking the boy and the girl does not arise at all. They are not even born yet. They are not even certain yet whether both may be girls, both may be boys. But if one is a boy and another is a girl, the marriage is settled. And people kept their word, their promises.

My own mother was married when she was seven years old. And her parents had to tie her to a pillar inside the house when the marriage party was coming* and there were many fireworks. And at the reception there was music and dance. And everybody was out of the house, and my mother reminds me still that, "I could not understand why only I was left inside the house and tied! They wouldn't let me go out." She had no understanding what marriage was. She wanted to see, like any child, everything beautiful that was happening outside--the whole village had gathered, and she was crying.

My father was not more than ten years old, and he had no understanding of what was happening. I used to ask him, "What was the most significant thing that you enjoyed in your wedding?"

He said, "Riding on the horse." Naturally, for the first time he was dressed like a king, with a knife hanging by his side, and he was sitting on the horse, and everybody was walking around. He enjoyed it tremendously. That was the most important thing that he enjoyed in his wedding.

A honeymoon was out of the question. Where will you send a ten-year-old boy and a seven-year-old girl for a honeymoon? So in India the honeymoon never used to exist, and in the past, nowhere else in the world either.

And when my father was ten years old and my mother was seven years old, my father's mother died. After the marriage, perhaps one or two years afterwards, the whole responsibility fell on my mother, who was only nine years old. Two small daughters my father's mother had left, and two small boys. So four children, and the responsibility on a nine-year-old girl and a twelve-year-old son.

My (paternal) grandfather never liked to live in the city where he had his shop. He loved the countryside. He had his own beautiful horse. And when his wife died he was absolutely free. You will not believe it, but in his time--and it is not long ago--the government used to give land to people for free. Because there was so much land, and there were not so many people to cultivate it.

So my grandfather got fifty acres of land free from the government. And he loved living sixteen miles away from the city where he had left the whole shop in the hands of his children--my father and mother--who were only twelve and nine years old. And he enjoyed creating a garden, creating a farm, and he loved to live there in the open air. He hated the city.

Now how can you think that there could be a generation gap? My father never had any experience of the freedom of young people of today. He never became young in that way.

Before he could have become young, he was already old, taking care of his younger brothers and sisters and the shop. And by the time he was twenty he had to arrange marriages for his sisters, marriages and education for his brothers.

I have never called my mother, "Mother," because before I was born she was taking care of four children who used to call her *Bhabhi*. Bhabhi means 'brother's wife'. And because four children were already calling my mother bhabhi, I also started calling her bhabhi. Even today I call her bhabhi, but she is my mother, not my brother's wife. And they have tried hard to make me change, but it comes so natural to me to call her bhabhi. All my brothers and sisters call her mother. Only I am crazy enough to call her bhabhi. But I learned it from the very beginning, when four other children...

And then I had a rapport with my uncles and with my father's sisters, a friendliness. They were a little older than me, but there was not much distance. I never thought of respect. They never thought of respect to be received. They loved me, I loved them.

It was a totally different world just seventy years ago. Generations were overlapping, and there used to be no youth. Now youth has come into existence and it will be growing bigger, because as machines are going to take more and more jobs in the factories, in the offices, what are you going to do with people? They cannot be left doing nothing, otherwise they will do something absurd, something irrational, something insane. They will go mad. So you have to extend the period of their education. *chit15*

*Note: Osho's mother was restrained because it was the custom that the bridal couple not see each other before the wedding ceremony

My diabetes is my inheritance. My great-grandfather had it, my grandfather had it, my father had it, I have it, all my uncles have it, all my brothers have it. It seems to be something intrinsic, so it cannot be cured; it can only be kept in control. *last317*

(2) Unusual events while Osho is in his mother's womb

My mother was just telling me yesterday...that when I was five months old in her womb, a miracle happened.

She was going from my father's house to her father's house; and it was the rainy season. It is customary in India for the first child to be born at the maternal father's home, so although it was the rainy season and very difficult--no roads, and she had to go on a horse--the sooner she went, the better; if she waited longer then it would have become more difficult, so she went with one of her cousin-brothers.

In the middle of the journey was a big river, the Narmada. It was in flood. When they reached the boat, the boatman saw that my mother was pregnant, and he asked my mother's cousin-brother, "What is your relationship?"

He was not aware that he would get into trouble so he simply said, "We are brother and sister."

The boatman refused; he said, "I cannot take you because your sister is pregnant--that means you are not two, you are three."

In India, this is a custom, an old custom--perhaps it started in the days of Krishna--that one should not travel on water, particularly in a boat, with one's sister's son. There is a danger of the boat sinking.

The boatman said, "What guarantee is there that the child in your sister's womb is a girl and not a boy? If he is a boy I don't want to take the risk--because it is not a question only of my life, sixty other people are going in the boat. Either you can come or your sister can come; both I won't take."

On both sides there were hills and jungle, and the boat used to go only one time a day. In the morning it would go--and the river is really vast at that point--and then it would come back by the evening. The next morning it would go again, the same boat. So either my mother had to remain on this side, which was dangerous, or go on that side, which was just as dangerous. So for three days they continued to ask him, beg him, saying that she was pregnant and he should be kind.

He said, "I can't help it--this is not done. If you can give me a guarantee that it is not a boy then I can take you; but how can you give me a guarantee?"

So for three days they had to stay in a temple there. In that temple lived a saint, very famous in those days in that area. Now, around that temple there has arisen a city in the memory of that saint, Saikheda. Saikheda means "the village of the saint." Sai means the saint; he was known as Sai Baba. It is not the same Sai Baba who became world-famous--Sai Baba of Shirdi--but they were contemporaries....

Finally my mother had to ask Sai Baba, "Can you do something? For three days we have been here. I am pregnant and my brother has told the boatman that he is my brother, and he won't take us in the boat. Now, unless you do something, say something to that boatman, we are in a fix. What to do? My brother cannot leave me here alone; I cannot go alone to the other side. On both sides are wild jungles and forests, and for at least twenty-four hours I will have to wait alone."

I never met Sai Baba, but in a way I did meet him; I was five months old. He just touched my mother's belly. My mother said, "What are you doing?"

He said, "I am touching the feet of your child."

The boatman saw this and said, "What are you doing, Baba? You have never touched anybody's feet."

And Baba said, "This is not anybody; and you are a fool--you should take them to the other side. Don't be worried. The soul that is within this womb is capable of saving thousands of people, so don't be worried about your sixty people--take her."

So my mother was saying, "At that time I became aware that I was carrying someone special."

I said, "As far as I understand, Sai Baba was a wise man: he really befooled the boatman! There is no miracle, there is nothing. And boats don't sink just because somebody is traveling with their sister's son. There is no rationality in the idea, it is just absurd. Perhaps sometime accidentally it may have happened and then it became a routine idea."

My own understanding is that because in Krishna's life his mother's brother was told by the astrologers that "one of the children of your sister will kill *you*," he kept his sister and his brother-in-law in prison. She gave birth to seven children, seven boys, and he killed them all. The eighth was Krishna, and of course when God Himself was born, the locks of the prison opened up, and the guards fell fast asleep, and Krishna's father took him out.

The river Yamuna was the boundary of Kansa's kingdom. Kansa was the person who was killing his sister's sons in the fear that one of the sons was going to kill him. The Yamuna was in flood--and it is one of the biggest rivers in India. The father of Krishna was very much afraid, but somehow the child had to be taken to the other side, to a friend's house whose wife had given birth to a girl so he could exchange them. He could bring the girl back with him because the next morning Kansa would be there asking, "Where is the child?" and planning to kill him. A girl he wouldn't kill--it had to be a boy.

But how to cross this river? There was no boat in the night, but it had to be crossed. But when God can open locks without keys, without anybody opening them--they simply opened up, the doors opened up, the guards fell asleep--God would do something.

So he put the child in a bucket on his head and passed through the river--something like what happened to Moses when the ocean parted. This time it happened in an Indian way. It could not have happened to Moses because that ocean was not Indian, but this river was.

As he entered the river, the river started rising higher. He was very much afraid: what was happening? He was hoping the river would subside, but it started rising. It went to the point where it touched the feet of Krishna, then it receded. This is the Indian way, it cannot happen anywhere else. How can the river miss such a point? When God is born and passing through her, just giving way is not enough, not mannerly.

Since that time there has been this idea that there is a certain antagonism between a person and his sister's son, because Krishna killed Kansa. The river was crossed, it subsided; it

favored the child. Since then rivers are angry against maternal uncles--all the rivers of India. And that superstition is carried even today.

I told my mother, "One thing is certain--that Sai Baba must have been a wise man and had some sense of humor." But she wouldn't listen. And it became known in the village what had happened, and to support it, after one month another thing happened which.... In life there are so many coincidences out of which you can make miracles. Once you are bent upon making a miracle then any coincidence can be turned into a miracle.

After one month there was a very great flood, and in front of my mother's house in the rainy season it was almost like a river. There was a lake, and a small road between the lake and the house, but in the rainy season so much water came that the road was completely like a river, and the lake and the road became merged into one. It was almost oceanic; as far as you could see it was all water. And that year perhaps India had the biggest floods ever.

Floods ordinarily happen every year in India, but that year a strange thing was noted, that floods started reversing the rivers' flow of water. The rains were so heavy that the ocean was not able to take the water as quickly as it was coming, so the water at the ocean front was stuck; it started flowing backwards. Where small rivers fall into big rivers, the big rivers refused to take the water, because they were not able even to contain their own water. The small rivers started moving backwards.

I have never seen it--that one also I missed--but my mother says that it was a strange phenomenon to see the water moving backwards. And it started entering houses; it entered my mother's house. It was a double-storied house, and the first story was completely full of water. Then it started entering the second story. Now, there was nowhere to go, so they were all sitting on the beds, the highest place that was possible there. But my mother said, "If Sai Baba was right, then something will happen." And it must have been a coincidence that the water came up to my mother's stomach and then receded!

These two miracles happened before I was born, so I have nothing to do with them. But they became known; when I was born I was almost a saint in the village! Everybody was so respectful; people were touching my feet, even old people. I was told later on that "the whole village has accepted you as a saint." *misery14*

(3) Osho is born in the village of Kuchwada

The East has never bothered about birthdays. The East simply laughs at the whole absurdity of it. What has chronological time to do with Krishna's birth? We don't have any record. Or we have many records, contradictory, contradicting each other.

But, see, I was born on eleventh December. If it can be proved that I was not born on eleventh December, will it be enough proof that I was never born? *yoga907*

I was incarnated into this body on this day. This is the day I saw for the first time the green of the trees and the blue of the skies. This was the day I for the first time opened my eyes and saw God all around. Of course the word 'God' didn't exist at that moment, but what I saw was God. *body01*

You can ask my mother something.... After my birth, for three days I didn't take any milk, and they were all worried, concerned. The doctors were concerned, because how was this child going to survive if he simply refused to take milk? But they had no idea of my difficulty, of what difficulty they were creating for me. They were trying to force me in every possible way. And there was no way I could explain to them, or that they could find out by themselves.

In my past life, before I died, I was on a fast. I wanted to complete a twenty-one day fast, but I was murdered before my fast was complete, three days before. Those three days remained in my awareness even in this birth; I had to complete my fast. I am really stubborn! Otherwise, people don't carry things from one life to another life; once a chapter is closed, it is closed.

But for three days they could not manage to put anything in my mouth; I simply rejected it. But after three days I was perfectly okay and they were all surprised: "Why was he refusing for three days? There was no sickness, no problem--and after three days he is perfectly normal." It remained a mystery to them.

But these things I don't want to talk about because to you they will all be hypothetical, and there is no way for me to prove them scientifically. And I don't want to give you any belief, so I go on cutting all that may create any belief system in your mind.

You love me, you trust me, so whatever I say you may trust it. But I insist, again and again, that anything that is not based on your experience, accept it only hypothetically. Don't make it your belief. If sometimes I give an example, that is sheer necessity--because the person has asked, "How did you manage to be so courageous and sharp in your childhood?"

I have not done anything, I have simply continued what I was doing in my past life. And that's why in my childhood I was thought to be crazy, eccentric--because I would not give any explanation of why I wanted to do something. I would simply say, "I want to do it. There are reasons for me, why I am doing it, but I cannot give you those reasons because you cannot understand."... *misery09*

I am reminded again of the small village where I was born. Why existence should have chosen that small village in the first place is unexplainable. It is as it should be. The village was beautiful. I have traveled far and wide but I have never come across that same beauty. One never comes again to the same. Things come and go, but it is never the same.

I can see that still, small village. Just a few huts near a pond, and a few tall trees where I used to play. There was no school in the village. That is of great importance, because I remained uneducated for almost nine years, and those are the most formative years. After that, even if you try, you cannot be educated. So in a way I am still uneducated, although I hold many degrees. Any uneducated man could have done it. And not any degree, but a first-class master's degree--that too can be done by any fool. So many fools do it every year that it has no significance. What is significant is that for my first years I remained without education. There was no school, no road, no railway, no post office. What a blessing! That small village was a world unto itself. Even in my times away from that village I remained in that world, uneducated.

I have read Ruskin's famous book, *Unto This Last*, and when I was reading it I was thinking of that village. *Unto This Last*...that village is still unaltered. No road connects it, no railway passes by, even now after almost fifty years; no post office, no police station, no doctor--in fact nobody falls ill in that village, it is so pure and so unpolluted. I have known people in that village who have not seen a railway train, who wonder what it looks like, who have not even seen a bus or a car. They have never left the village. They live so blissfully and silently.

My birthplace, Kuchwada, was a village with no railway line and no post office. It had small hills, hillocks rather, but a beautiful lake, and a few huts, just straw huts. The only brick house was the one I was born in, and that too was not much of a brick house. It was just a little house.

I can see it now, and can describe its every detail...but more than the house or the village, I remember the people. I have come across millions of people, but the people of that village were more innocent than any, because they were very primitive. They knew nothing of the world. Not even a single newspaper had ever entered that village. You can now understand why there was no school, not even a primary school...what a blessing! No modern child can afford it.

I remained uneducated for those years and they were the most beautiful years....

Kuchwada was surrounded by small hills and there was a small pond. Nobody could describe that pond except Basho. Even he does not describe the pond, he simply says:

The ancient pond

Frog jumps in

Plop!

Is this a description? The pond is only mentioned, the frog too. No description of the pond or the frog...and plop!

The village had an ancient pond, very ancient, and very ancient trees surrounding it--they were perhaps hundreds of years old--and beautiful rocks all around...and certainly the frogs

jumped. Day in and day out you could hear "plop," again and again. The sound of frogs jumping really helped the prevailing silence. That sound made the silence richer, more meaningful.

This is the beauty of Basho: he could describe something without actually describing it. He could say something without even mentioning a word. "Plop!" Now, is this a word? No word could do justice to the sound of a frog jumping into the ancient pond, but Basho did it justice.

I am not a Basho, and that village needed a Basho. Perhaps he would have made beautiful sketches, paintings, and haikus.... I have not done anything about that village--you will wonder why--I have not even visited it again. Once is enough. I never go to a place twice. For me number two does not exist. I have left many villages, many towns, never to return again. Once gone, gone forever, that's my way; so I have not returned to that village. The villagers have sent messages to me to come at least once more. I told them through a messenger, "I have been there once already, twice is not my way."

But the silence of that ancient pond stays with me. *glimps01*

I was a lonely child because I was brought up by my maternal grandfather and grandmother; I was not with my father and mother. Those two old people were alone and they wanted a child who would be the joy of their last days. So my father and mother agreed: I was their eldest child, the first-born; they sent me.

I don't remember any relationship with my father's family in the early years of my childhood. With these two old men--my grandfather and his old servant, who was really a beautiful man--and my old grandmother...these three people. And the gap was so big...I was absolutely alone. It was not company, it could not be company. They tried their hardest to be as friendly to me as possible but it was just not possible.

I was left to myself. I could not say things to them. I had nobody else, because in that small village my family were the richest; and it was such a small village--not more than two hundred people in all--and so poor that my grandparents would not allow me to mix with the village children. They were dirty, and of course they were almost beggars. So there was no way to have friends. That caused a great impact. In my whole life I have never been a friend, I have never known anybody to be a friend. Yes, acquaintances I had.

In those first, early years I was so lonely that I started enjoying it; and it is really a joy. So it was not a curse to me, it proved a blessing. I started enjoying it, and I started feeling self-sufficient; I was not dependent on anybody.

I have never been interested in games for the simple reason that from my very childhood there was no way to play, there was nobody to play with. I can still see myself in those earliest years, just sitting.

We had a beautiful spot where our house was, just in front of a lake. Far away for miles, the lake...and it was so beautiful and so silent. Only once in while would you see a line of white

cranes flying, or making love calls, and the peace would be disturbed; otherwise, it was almost the right place for meditation. And when they would disturb the peace--a love call from a bird...after his call the peace would deepen, it would become deeper.

The lake was full of lotus flowers, and I would sit for hours so self-content, as if the world did not matter: the lotuses, the white cranes, the silence....

And my grandparents were very aware of one thing, that I enjoyed my aloneness. They had continuously been seeing that I had no desire to go to the village to meet anybody, or to talk with anybody. Even if they wanted to talk my answers were yes, or no; I was not interested in talking either. So they became aware of one thing, that I enjoyed my aloneness, and it was their sacred duty not to disturb me.

So for seven years continuously nobody tried to corrupt my innocence; there was nobody. Those three old people who lived in the house, the servant and my grandparents, were all protective in every possible way that nobody should disturb me. In fact I started feeling, as I grew up, a little embarrassed that because of me they could not talk, they could not be normal as everybody is. It was just the opposite situation....

It happens with children that you tell them, "Be silent because your father is thinking, your grandfather is resting. Be quiet, sit silently." In my childhood it happened the opposite way. Now I cannot answer why and how; it simply happened. That's why I said it simply *happened*--the credit does not go to me.

All those three old people were continuously making signs to each other: "Don't disturb him--he is enjoying so much." And they started loving my silence.

Silence has its vibe; it is infectious, particularly a child's silence which is not forced, which is not because you are saying, "I will beat you if you create any nuisance or noise." No, that is not silence. That will not create the joyous vibration that I am talking about, when a child is silent on his own, enjoying for no reason; his happiness is uncaused. That creates great ripples all around.

In a better world, every family will learn from children. You are in such a hurry to teach them. Nobody seems to learn from them, and they have much to teach you. And you have nothing to teach them.

Just because you are older and powerful you start making them just like you without ever thinking about what you are, where you have reached, what your status is in the inner world. You are a pauper; and you want the same for your child also?

But nobody thinks; otherwise people would learn from small children. Children bring so much from the other world because they are such fresh arrivals. They still carry the silence of the womb, the silence of the very existence.

So it was just a coincidence that for seven years I remained undisturbed--no one to nag me, to prepare me for the world of business, politics, diplomacy. My grandparents were more interested in leaving me as natural as possible--particularly my grandmother. She is one of the causes--these small things affect all your life patterns--she is one of the causes of my respect for the whole of womanhood.

She was a simple woman, uneducated, but immensely sensitive. She made it clear to my grandfather and the servant: "We all have lived a certain kind of life which has not led us anywhere. We are as empty as ever, and now death is coming close." She insisted, "Let this child be uninfluenced by us. What influence can we...? We can only make him like us, and we are nothing. Give him an opportunity to be himself."

My grandfather--I heard them discussing in the night, thinking that I was asleep--used to say to her, "You are telling me to do this, and I am doing it; but he is somebody else's son, and sooner or later he will have to go to his parents. What will they say?--`You have not taught him any manners, any etiquette, he is absolutely wild.'"

She said, "Don't be worried about that. In this whole world everybody is civilized, has manners, etiquette, but what is the gain? You are very civilized--what have you got out of it? At the most his parents will be angry at us. So what?--let them be angry. They can't harm us, and by that time the child will be strong enough that they cannot change his life course."

I am tremendously grateful to that old woman. My grandfather was again and again worried that sooner or later he was going to be responsible: "They will say, `We left our child with you and you have not taught him anything.'"

My grandmother did not even allow...because there was one man in the village who could at least teach me the beginnings of language, mathematics, a little geography. He was educated to the fourth grade--the lowest four; that is what was called primary education in India. But he was the most educated man in the town.

My grandfather tried hard: "He can come and he can teach him. At least he will know the alphabet, some mathematics, so when he goes to his parents they will not say that we just wasted seven years completely."

But my grandmother said, "Let them do whatsoever they want to do after seven years. For seven years he has to be just his natural self, and we are not going to interfere." And her argument was always, "You know the alphabet, so what? You know mathematics, so what? You have earned a little money; do you want him also to earn a little money and live just like you?"

That was enough to keep that old man silent. What to do? He was in a difficulty because he could not argue, and he knew that he would be held responsible, not she, because my father would ask him, "What have you done?" And actually that would have been the case, but fortunately he died before my father could ask.

But my father continuously was saying, "That old man is responsible, he has spoiled the child." But now I was strong enough, and I made it clear to him: "Before me, never say a single word against my maternal grandfather. He has saved me from being spoiled by you--that is your real anger. But you have other children--spoil them. And at the final stage you will say who IS spoiled."

He had other children, and more and more children went on coming. I used to tease him, "You please bring one child more, make it a dozen. *Eleven* children? People ask, "How many children?" Eleven does not look right; one dozen is more impressive."

And in later years I used to tell him, "You go on spoiling all your children; I am wild, and I will remain wild."

What you see as innocence is nothing but wildness. What you see as clarity is nothing but wildness. Somehow I remained out of the grip of civilization.

And once I was strong enough.... And that's why people insist, "Take hold of the child as quickly as possible, don't waste time because the earlier you take hold of the child, the easier it is. Once the child becomes strong enough, then to bend him according to your desires will be difficult."

And life has seven-year circles. By the seventh year the child is perfectly strong; now you cannot do anything. Now he knows where to go, what to do. He is capable of arguing. He is capable of seeing what is right and what is wrong. And his clarity will be at the climax when he is seven. If you don't disturb his earlier years, then at the seventh he is so crystal clear about everything that his whole life will be lived without any repentance.

I have lived without any repentance. I have tried to find: Have I done anything wrong, ever? Not that people have been thinking that all that I have done is right, that is not the point: I have never thought anything that I have done was wrong. The whole world may think it was wrong, but to me there is absolute certainty that it was right; it was the right thing to do.

So there is no question of repenting about the past. And when you don't have to repent about the past you are free from it. The past keeps you entangled like an octopus because you go on feeling, "That thing I should not have done," or, "That thing which I was supposed to do and did not do...." All those things go on pulling you backwards.

I don't see anything behind me, no past.

If I say something about my past, it is simply factual memory, it has no psychological involvement. I am telling you as if I am telling you about somebody else. It is just factual; it has nothing to do with my personal involvement. It might have occurred to somebody else, it might have happened to somebody else.

So remember, a factual memory is not enslaving. Psychological memory is, and psychological memory is made up of things that you think, or you have been conditioned to think, were wrong and you did them. Then there is a wound, a psychological wound. *dark02*

(4) Osho's grandparents, Nani and Nana

For most of my very early years I lived with my mother's parents. Those years are unforgettable. Even if I reach to Dante's paradise I will still remember those years. A small village, poor people, but my grandfather--I mean my mother's father--was a generous man. He was poor, but rich in his generosity. He gave to each and everyone whatsoever he had. I learned the art of giving from him; I have to accept it. I never saw him say no to any beggar or anybody.

I called my mother's father "Nana"; that's the way the mother's father is called in India. My mother's mother is called "Nani." I used to ask my grandfather, "Nana, where did you get such a beautiful wife?"

My grandmother looked more Greek than Indian....

Perhaps there was some Greek blood in her. No race can claim purity. The Indians particularly should not claim any purity of blood--the Hunas, the Moguls, the Greeks and many others have attacked, conquered and ruled India. They have mixed themselves in the Indian blood, and it was so apparent with my grandmother. Her features were not Indian, she looked Greek, and she was a strong woman, very strong. My Nana died when he was not more than fifty. My grandmother lived till eighty and she was fully healthy. Even then nobody thought she was going to die. I promised her one thing, that when she died I would come, and that would be my last visit to the family. She died in 1970. I had to fulfill my promise.

For my first years I knew my Nani as my mother; those are the years when one grows. This circle* is for my Nani. My own mother came after that; I was already grown up, already made in a certain style. And my grandmother helped me immensely. My grandfather loved me, but could not help me much. He was so loving, but to be of help more is needed--a certain kind of strength. He was always afraid of my grandmother. He was, in a sense, a henpecked husband. When it comes to the truth, I am always true. He loved me, he helped me...what can I do if he was a henpecked husband? Ninety-nine point nine percent of husbands are, so it is okay. *glimps02*

*Note: circle: reminiscences of a series of events, which are now seen to be interconnected, forming a circle

This too is worth noting: that ninety years ago, in India, Nani had had the courage to fall in love. She remained unmarried up till the age of twenty-four. That was very rare. I asked her once why she had remained unmarried for so long. She was such a beautiful woman...I just jokingly told her that even the king of Chhatarpur, the state where Khajuraho is, might have fallen in love with her.

She said, "It is strange that you should mention it, because he did. I refused him, and not only him but many others too." In those days in India, girls were married when they were seven, or at the most nine years of age. Just the fear of love...if they are older they may fall in love. But my grandmother's father was a poet; his songs are still sung in Khajuraho and nearby villages. He insisted that unless she agreed, he was not going to marry her to anybody. As chance would have it, she fell in love with my grandfather.

I asked her, "That is even stranger: you refused the king of Chhatarpur, and yet you fell in love with this poor man. For what? He was certainly not a very handsome man, nor extraordinary in any other way; why did you fall in love with him?"

She said, "You are asking the wrong question. Falling has no 'why' to it. I just saw him, and that was it. I saw his eyes, and a trust arose in me that has never wavered."

I had also asked my grandfather, "Nani says she fell in love with you. That's okay on her part, but why did you allow the marriage to happen?"

He said, "I am not a poet or a thinker, but I can recognize beauty when I see it."

I never saw a more beautiful woman than my Nani. I myself was in love with her, and loved her throughout her whole life....

I am fortunate in many ways, but I was most fortunate in having my maternal grandparents...and those early golden years. *glimps06*

I was born in a family which belongs to a very small section of Jainism...it follows a madman who must have been just a little bit less mad than me. I cannot say more mad than me.

I am going to talk about his two books, which are not translated in English, not even into Hindi, because they are untranslatable. I don't think that he is ever going to have any international audience. Impossible. He believes in no language, no grammar, nothing whatsoever. He speaks exactly like a madman. His book is *Shunya Svabhava*--"The Nature of Emptiness."

It is just a few pages, but of tremendous significance. Each sentence contains scriptures, but very difficult to understand. You will naturally ask how could I understand him. In the first place just as Martin Buber was born into a Hassid family, I was born into this madman's tradition. His name is Taran Taran. It is not his real name, but nobody knows his real name. *Taran Taran* simply means "The Savior." That has become his name.

I have breathed him from my very childhood, listened to his songs, wondered what he meant. But a child never cares about the meaning...the song was beautiful, the rhythm was beautiful, the dance was beautiful, and it is enough.

One needs to understand such people only if one is grown up, otherwise, if from their very childhood they are surrounded by the milieu they will not need to understand and yet deep down in their guts they will understand.

I understand Taran Taran--not intellectually, but existentially. Moreover I also know what he is talking about. Even if I had not been born into a family of his followers I would have understood him. I have understood so many different traditions and it is not that I have been born into all of them...I have understood so many madmen that anybody could go mad just by making an effort to understand them! But just look at me, they have not affected me at all.... They have remained somewhere below me. I have remained transcendental to them all.

Still, I would have understood Taran Taran. I may not have come into contact with him, that is possible, because his followers are very few, just a few thousand, and found only in the middle parts of India. And they are so afraid because of their being in such a minority, that they don't call themselves the followers of Taran Taran, they call themselves Jainas. Secretly they believe, not in Mahavira as the rest of the Jainas believe, but in Taran Taran, the founder of their sect.

Jainism itself is a very small religion; only three million people believe in it. There are two main sects: the Digambaras, and the Svetambaras. The Digambaras believe that Mahavira lived naked, and was naked. The word *digambara* means "sky clad"; metaphorically it means "the naked." This is the oldest sect.

The word *svetambara* means the "white clad," and the followers of this sect believe that although Mahavira was naked he was covered by the gods in an invisible white cloth...this is a compromise just to satisfy the Hindus.

The followers of Taran Taran belong to the Digambara sect, and they are the most revolutionary of the Jainas. They don't even worship the statues of Mahavira; their temples are empty, signifying the inner emptiness.

It would have been almost impossible to have come to know Taran if not for the chance that I was born into a family who believed in him. But I thank God, it was worth the trouble to be born into that family. All the troubles can be forgiven just for this one thing, that they acquainted me with a tremendous mystic.

His book *Shunya Svabhava* says only one thing again and again, just like a madman. You know me, you can understand. I have been saying the same thing again and again for twenty-five years...I've said again and again "Awake!" That's what he does in *Shunya Svabhava*. *books14*

Nana used to go to the temple every morning, yet he never said, "Come with me." He never indoctrinated me. That is what is great...not to indoctrinate. It is so human to force a helpless child to follow your beliefs. But he remained untempted--yes, I call it the greatest temptation. The moment you see someone dependent on you in any way, you start indoctrinating. He never even said to me, "You are a Jaina."

I remember perfectly--it was the time that the census was being taken. The officer had come to our house. He made many inquiries about many things. They asked about my grandfather's religion; he said, "Jainism." They then asked about my grandmother's religion. My Nana said, "You can ask her yourself. Religion is a private affair. I myself have never asked her." What a man!

My grandmother answered, "I do not believe in any religion whatsoever. All religions look childish to me." The officer was shocked. Even I was taken aback. She does not believe in any religion at all! In India to find a woman who does not believe in any religion at all is impossible. But she was born in Khajuraho, perhaps into a family of Tantrikas, who have never believed in any religion. They have practiced meditation but they have never believed in any religion.

It sounds very illogical to a Western mind: meditation without religion? Yes...in fact, if you believe in any religion you cannot meditate. Religion is an interference in your meditation. Meditation needs no God, no heaven, no hell, no fear of punishment, and no allurements of pleasure. Meditation has nothing to do with mind; meditation is beyond it, whereas religion is only mind, it is within mind.

I know Nani never went to the temple, but she taught me one mantra which I will reveal for the first time. It is a Jaina mantra, but it has nothing to do with Jainas as such. It is purely accidental that it is related to Jainism....

The mantra is so beautiful. It is going to be difficult to translate it, but I will do my best...or my worst. First listen to the mantra in its original beauty:

Namo arihantanam namo namo

Namo siddhanam namo namo

Namo uvajjhayanam namo namo

Namo loye savva sahanam namo namo

Aeso panch nammukaro

Savva pavappanasano

Mangalam cha savvesam padhamam havai mangalam

Arihante saranam pavajjhami

Siddhe saranam pavajjhami

Sahu saranam pavajjhami

Namo arihantanam namo namo

Namo siddhanam namo namo

Namo uvajjhayanam namo namo

Om, shantih, shantih, shantih....

Now my effort at translation: "I go to the feet of, I bow down to, the *arihantas....*" Arihanta is the name in Jainism, as *arhat* is in Buddhism, for one who has achieved the ultimate but cares nothing about anybody else. He has come home and turned his back on the world. He does not create a religion, he does not even preach, he does not even declare. Of course he has to be remembered first. The first remembrance is for all those who have known and remained silent. The first respect is not for words, but for silence. Not for serving others, but for the sheer achievement of one's self. It does not matter whether one serves others or not; that is secondary, not primary. The primary is that one has achieved one's self, and it is so difficult in this world to know one's self....

The Jainas call the person arihanta who has attained to himself and is so drowned, so drunk in the beauty of his realization that he has forgotten the whole world. The word 'arihanta' literally means "one who has killed the enemy"--and the enemy is the ego. The first part of the mantra means, "I touch the feet of the one who has attained himself."

The second part is: *Namo siddhanam namo namo*. This mantra is in Prakrit, not Sanskrit. Prakrit is the language of the Jainas; it is more ancient than Sanskrit. The very word 'sanskrit' means refined. You can understand by the word 'refined' there must have been something before it, otherwise what are you going to refine? 'Prakrit' means unrefined, natural, raw, and the Jainas are correct when they say their language is the most ancient in the world. Their religion too is the most ancient.

The Hindu scripture *Rigveda* mentions the first master of the Jainas, Adinatha. That certainly means it is far more ancient than *Rigveda*. *Rigveda* is the oldest book in the world, and it talks about the Jaina *tirthankara*, Adinatha, with such respect that one thing is certain, that he could not have been a contemporary of the people writing *Rigveda....*

The mantra is in Prakrit, raw and unrefined. The second line is: *Namo siddhanam namo namo*--"I touch the feet of the one who has become his being." So, what is the difference between the first and the second?

The arihanta never looks back, never bothers about any kind of service, Christian or otherwise. The siddha, once in a while holds out his hand to drowning humanity, but only once in a while, not always. It is not a necessity, it is not compulsory, it is his choice; he may or he may not.

Hence the third: *Namo uvajjhayanam namo namo...*"I touch the feet of the masters, the uvajjhaya." They have achieved the same, but they face the world, they serve the world. They are in the world and not of it...but still in it.

The fourth: *Namo loye savva sahunam namo namo...*"I touch the feet of the teachers." You know the subtle difference between a master and a teacher. The master has known, and imparts what he has known. The teacher has received from one who has known, and delivers it intact to the world, but he himself has not known.

The composers of this mantra are really beautiful; they even touch the feet of those who have not known themselves, but at least are carrying the message of the masters to the masses.

Number five is one of the most significant sentences I have ever come across in my whole life. It is strange that it was given to me by my grandmother when I was a small child. When I explain it to you, you too will see the beauty of it. Only she was capable of giving it to me. I don't know anybody else who had the guts to really proclaim it, although all Jainas repeat it in their temples. But to repeat is one thing; to impart it to one you love is totally another.

"I touch the feet of all those who have known themselves"...without any distinction, whether they are Hindus, Jainas, Buddhists, Christians, Mohammedans. The mantra says, "I touch the feet of all those who have known themselves." This is the only mantra, as far as I know, which is absolutely nonsectarian.

The other four parts are not different from the fifth, they are all contained in it, but it has a vastness which those others do not have. The fifth line must be written on all the temples, all the churches, irrespective of to whom they belong, because it says, "I touch the feet of all those who have known it." It does not say "who have known God." Even the "it" can be dropped: I am only putting "it" in the translation. The original simply means "touching the feet of those who have known"--no "it." I am putting "it" in just to fulfill the demands of your language; otherwise someone is bound to ask, "Known? Known what? What is the object of knowledge?" There is no object of knowledge; there is nothing to know, only the knower.

This mantra was the only religious thing, if you can call it religious, given to me by my grandmother, and that too, not by my grandfather but by my grandmother...because one night I asked her. One night she said, "You look awake. Can't you sleep? Are you planning tomorrow's mischief?"

I said, "No, but somehow a question is arising in me. Everybody has a religion, and when people ask me, 'To what religion do you belong?' I shrug my shoulders. Now, certainly shrugging your shoulders is not a religion, so I want to ask you, what should I say?"

She said, "I myself don't belong to any religion, but I love this mantra, and this is all I can give you--not because it is traditionally Jaina, but only because I have known its beauty. I have repeated it millions of times and always I have found tremendous peace...just the feeling of touching the feet of all those who have known. I can give you this mantra; more than that is not possible for me."

Now I can say that woman was really great, because as far as religion is concerned, everybody is lying: Christians, Jews, Jainas, Mohammedans--everybody is lying. They all talk of God, heaven and hell, angels and all kinds of nonsense, without knowing anything at all. She was great, not because she knew but because she was unable to lie to a child. Nobody should lie--to a child at least it is unforgivable.

Children have been exploited for centuries just because they are willing to trust. You can lie to them very easily and they will trust you. If you are a father, a mother, they will think you are bound to be true. That's how the whole of humanity lives in corruption, in a thick mud, very slippery, a thick mud of lies told to children for centuries.

If we can do just one thing, a simple thing: not lie to children, and to confess to them our ignorance, then we will be religious, and we will put them on the path of religion. Children are only innocence; leave them not your so-called knowledge. But you yourself must first be innocent, unlying, true, even if it shatters your ego--and it will shatter. It is bound to shatter.

My grandfather never told me to go to the temple, to follow him. I used to follow him many times, but he would say, "Go away. If you want to go to the temple, go alone. Don't follow me."

He was not a hard man, but on this point he was absolutely hard. I asked him again and again, "Can you give me something of your experience?" And he would always avoid it....

"Namo arihantanam namo namo

Namo siddhanam namo namo

Namo uvajjhayanam namo namo

Namo loye savva sahanam namo namo

Om, shantih, shantih, shantih...."

What does it mean? It means "Om"--the ultimate sound of soundlessness. And he disappeared like a dewdrop in the first rays of the sun.

There is only peace, peace, peace.... I am entering into it now....

Namo arihantanam namo namo....

I go to the feet of those who have known.

I go to the feet of those who have achieved.

I go to the feet of all who are masters.

I go to the feet of all the teachers.

I go to the feet of all who have ever known,

Unconditionally.

Om, shantih, shantih, shantih. glimps05

My grandfather wanted the greatest astrologers in India to make my birth chart. Although he was not very rich--in fact not even rich, what to say of very rich, but in that village he was the richest person--he was ready to pay any price for the birth chart. He made the long journey to Varanasi and saw the famous men. Looking at the notes and dates my grandfather had brought, the greatest astrologer of them all said, "I am sorry, I can only make this birth chart after seven years. If the child survives then I will make his chart without any charge, but I don't think he will survive. If he does it will be a miracle, because then there is a possibility for him to become a buddha."

My grandfather came home weeping. I had never seen tears in his eyes. I asked, "What is the matter?"

He said, "I have to wait until you are seven. Who knows whether I will survive those years or not? Who knows whether the astrologer himself will survive, because he is so old. And I am a little concerned about you."

I said, "What's the concern?"

He said, "The concern is not that you may die, my concern is that you may become a buddha."

I laughed, and amongst his tears he also started laughing. Then he himself said, "It is strange that I was worried. Yes, what is wrong in being a buddha?"...

When I was seven an astrologer came to my grandfather's village searching for me. When a beautiful horse stopped in front of our house, we all rushed out. The horse looked so royal, and the rider was none other than one of the famous astrologers.... He said to me, "So you are still alive? I have made your birth chart. I was worried, because people like you don't survive long."

My grandfather sold all the ornaments in the house just to give a feast for all the neighboring villages, to celebrate that I was going to become a buddha, and yet I don't think he even understood the meaning of the word 'buddha'.

He was a Jaina and may not have even heard it before. But he was happy, immensely happy...dancing, because I was to become a buddha. At that moment I could not believe that he could be so happy just because of this word 'buddha'. When everyone had departed I asked him, "What is the meaning of 'buddha'?"

He said, "I don't know, it just sounds good. Moreover I am a Jaina. We will find out from some Buddhist."

In that small village there were no Buddhists, but he said, "Someday, when a passing Buddhist *bhikkhu* comes by, we will know the meaning."

But he was so happy just because the astrologer had said that I was to become a buddha. He then said to me, "I guess 'buddha' must mean someone who is very intelligent." In Hindi *buddhi* means intelligence, so he thought 'buddha' meant the intelligent one.

He came very close, he almost guessed right. Alas that he is not alive, otherwise he would have seen what being a buddha means--not the dictionary meaning, but an encounter with a living, awakened one. And I can see him dancing, seeing that his grandson has become a buddha. That would have been enough to make him enlightened! But he died. His death was one of my most significant experiences. Of that, later on. *glimps02*

And to me he was not just a maternal grandfather.

It is very difficult for me to define what he was to me. He used to call me Rajah--*rajah* means the king--and for those seven years he managed to have me live like a king. On my birthday he used to bring an elephant from a nearby town.... Elephants in India, in those days, were kept either by kings--because it is very costly, the maintenance, the food and the service that the elephant requires--or by saints.

Two types of people used to have them. The saints could have elephants because they had so many followers. Just as the followers looked after the saint, they looked after the elephant. Nearby there was a saint who had an elephant, so for my birthday my maternal grandfather used to bring the elephant. He would put me on the elephant with two bags, one on either side, full of silver coins....

In my childhood, in India, notes had not appeared; pure silver was still used for the rupee. My grandfather would fill two bags, big bags, hanging on either side, with silver coins, and I would go around the village throwing the silver coins. That's how he used to celebrate my birthday. Once I started, he would come in his bullock cart behind me with more rupees, and he would go on telling me, "Don't be miserly--I am keeping enough. You cannot throw more than I have. Go on throwing!"

Naturally, the whole village followed the elephant. It was not a big village either, not more than two or three hundred people in the whole village, so I would go around the village, the only street in the village. He managed in every possible way to give me the idea that I belonged to some royal family. *person27*

In my Nani's village I was continuously either in the lake or in the river. The river was a little too far away, perhaps two miles, so I had to choose the lake more often. But once in a while I used to go to the river, because the quality of a river and a lake are totally different. A lake, in a certain way, is dead, closed, not flowing, not going anywhere at all, static. That's the meaning of death: it is not dynamic.

The river is always on the go, rushing to some unknown goal, perhaps not knowing at all what that goal is, but it reaches, knowing or unknowing--it reaches the goal. The lake never moves. It remains where it is, dormant, simply dying, every day dying; there is no resurrection. But the river, howsoever small, is as big as the ocean, because sooner or later it is going to become the ocean.

I have always loved the feel of the flow: just going, that flux, that continuous movement...aliveness. So, even though the river was two miles away, I used once in a while to go just to have the taste. *glimps27*

I used to swim in the lake. Naturally my grandfather was afraid. He put a strange man to guard over me, in a boat. In that primitive village you cannot conceive what a "boat" meant. It is called a *dongi*. It is nothing but the hollowed-out trunk of a tree. It is not an ordinary boat. It is round, and that is the danger: unless you are an expert you cannot row it. It can roll at any moment. Just a little imbalance and you are gone forever. It is very dangerous.

I learned balance through rowing a dongi. Nothing could be more helpful. I learned the "middle way" because you have to be exactly in the middle: this way, and you are gone; that way, and you are gone. You cannot even breathe, and you have to remain absolutely silent; only then can you row the dongi. *glimps03*

During those first years when I lived with my grandfather, I was absolutely protected from punishment. He never said "Do this," or "Don't do that." On the contrary he put his most obedient servant, Bhoora, at my service, to protect me. Bhoora used to carry a very primitive gun with him. He used to follow me at a distance, but that was enough to frighten the villagers. That was enough to allow me to do whatsoever I wanted.

Anything one could imagine...like riding on a buffalo backwards with Bhoora following....

In my village particularly, and all over India, nobody rides on a buffalo. The Chinese are strange people, and this person Lao Tzu was the strangest of all. But God knows, and only God knows, how I discovered the idea--even I don't know--to sit on a buffalo in the marketplace, backwards. I assume it was because I always liked anything absurd....

Those early years--if they could be given to me again, I would be ready to be born again. But you know, and I know, nothing can be repeated. That's why I am saying that I would be ready to be born again; otherwise who wants to, even though those days were full of beauty....

I was so mischievous. I cannot live without it; it is my nourishment. I can understand the old man, my grandfather, and the trouble my mischief caused him. The whole day he would sit on his *gaddi*--as the seat of a rich man is called in India--listening less to his customers, and more to the complainers. But he used to say to them, "I am ready to pay for any damage he has done, but remember, I am not going to punish him."

Perhaps his very patience with me, a mischievous child...even I could not tolerate it. If a child like that was given to me and for years...my God! Even for minutes and I would throw the child out of the door forever. Perhaps those years worked a miracle for my grandfather; that immense patience paid. He became more and more silent. I saw it growing every day. Once in a while I would say, "Nana, you can punish me. You need not be so tolerant." And, can you believe it, he would cry! Tears would come to his eyes, and he would say, "Punish you? I cannot do that. I can punish myself but not you."

Never, for a single moment, have I ever seen the shadow of anger towards me in his eyes--and believe me, I did everything that one thousand children could do. In the morning, even before breakfast I was into my mischief, until late at night. Sometimes I would come home so late--three o'clock in the morning. But what a man he was! He never said, "You are too late. This is not the time for a child to come home." No, not even once. In fact, in front of me he would avoid looking at the clock on the wall. *glimps05*

(5) *The family servant, Bhoora*

The man who was put on guard to save me, I called him strange. Why? Because his name was Bhoora, and it means "white man." He was the only white man in our village. He was not a European; it was just by chance that he did not look like an Indian. He looked more like a European but he was not. His mother most probably had worked in a British Army camp and had become pregnant there. That's why nobody knew his name, everybody called him Bhoora. Bhoora means "the white one." It is not a name but it became his name. He was a very impressive-looking man. He came to work for my grandfather from early childhood, and even though he was a servant he was treated like one of the family.

I also called him strange because although I have come to know many people in the world, one rarely comes across such a man as Bhoora. He was a man you could trust. You could say anything to him and he would keep the secret forever. This fact became known to my family only when my grandfather died....

What a man! But such men used to exist on earth. They are disappearing by and by, and instead of such people you find all kinds of cunning people taking their place. These people are the very salt of the earth. I call Bhoora a strange man because in a cunning world, to be simple *is* strange. It is to be a stranger, not of this world. *glimps03*

Bhoora may have been just an obedient servant to my grandfather, but to me he was a friend. Most of the time we were together--in the fields, in the forest, on the lake, everywhere. Bhoora followed me like a shadow, not interfering, always ready to help, and with such a great heart...so poor and yet so rich, together.

He never invited me to his house. Once I asked him, "Bhoora, why do you never invite me to your house?"

He said, "I am so poor that although I want to invite you, my poverty prevents me. I don't want you to see that ugly house in all its dirtiness. In this life I cannot see a time when I will be able to invite you. I really have dropped the very idea."

He was very poor. In that village there were two parts: one for the higher castes, and the other for the poorer ones, on the other side of the lake. That's where Bhoora lived. Although I tried many times to reach his house I could not manage it because he was always following me like a shadow. He would prevent me before I even stepped in that direction.

Even my horse used to listen to him. When it came to going towards his house, Bhoora would say, "No! Don't go." Of course he had brought the horse up from its very childhood; they understood each other, and the horse would stop. There would be no way to get the horse to move either towards Bhoora's house, or even towards the poorer part of the village. I had only seen it from the other side, the richer, where the brahmins and the Jainas lived, and all those who are by birth, pure. Bhoora was a sudra. The word 'sudra' means "impure by birth," and there is no way for a sudra to purify himself.

This is the work of Manu*. That's why I condemn him and hate him. I denounce him, and want the world to know of this man, Manu, because unless we know of such people we will never be able to be free of them. They will continue to influence us in some form or another. Either it is race--even in America, if you are a negro, you are a sudra, a "nigger," untouchable.

Whether you are a negro or a white man, both need to be acquainted with the insane philosophy of Manu. It is Manu who has influenced the two world wars in a very subtle way. And perhaps he will be the cause of the third, and last...a really influential man!...

I don't think any man has influenced humanity more than Manu. Even today, whether you know his name or not, he influences you. If you think yourself superior just because you are white or black, or just because you are a man or a woman, somehow Manu is pulling your strings. Manu has to be absolutely discarded. *glimps19*

*Note: Manu gave the ancient caste system its scriptural 'authority' in his books Manu Samhita and Manu Smriti. Nietzsche and Hitler were influenced by Manu

I was looking at some pictures of the marriage procession of Princess Diana, and strangely, the only thing that impressed me in the whole nonsense was the beautiful horses, their joyous dance. Looking at those horses I remembered my own horse. I have not told anyone about it...but now that I am not keeping anything secret, even this can be told.

I not only owned one horse; in fact I had four horses. One was my own--and you know how fussy I am...even today nobody else can ride in the Rolls Royces. It is just fussiness. I was the same at that time too. Nobody, not even my grandfather, was allowed to ride my horse. Of course, I was allowed to ride everyone else's horse. Both my grandfather and my grandmother had one. It was strange in an Indian village for a woman to ride a horse--but she was a strange woman, what to do! The fourth horse was for Bhoora, the servant who always followed me with his gun, at a distance of course.

Destiny is strange. I have never harmed anyone in my life, not even in my dreams. I am absolutely vegetarian. But as destiny would have it, from my very childhood I have been followed by a guard. I don't know why, but since Bhoora I have never been without a guard. Even today my guards are always either ahead or behind, but always there. Bhoora started the whole game.

I already told you that he looked like a European, that's why he was called Bhoora. It was not his real name. *Bhoora* simply means "the white one." Even I don't know his real name at all. He looked European, very European, and it looked really strange, especially in that village where I don't think any European had ever entered. And still there are guards....

Even when I was a child, I could see the point of Bhoora following me at a distance on his horse, because twice there was an attempt to abduct me. I don't know why anybody should have been interested in me. Now at least I can understand. My grandfather, though not very rich by Western standards, was certainly very rich in that village. *Dakaits*...it is not an English word; it comes from the Hindi word *daku*.... *Dakait* is a transliteration of *daku*; it means thief--not just an ordinary thief, but when a group of people, armed and organized, plan the act of stealing, then it is *dakaitry*.

Even when I was young, in India it was a common practice to steal rich people's children, then to threaten the parents that if they didn't pay, then the hands of the child would be cut off. If they paid, then they could save the child's hands. Sometimes the threat would be to blind the child, or if the parents were really rich then the threat was direct--that the child would be killed. To save the child, the poor parents were ready to do anything whatsoever.

Twice they tried to steal me. Two things saved me: one was my horse, who was a really strong Arabian; the second was Bhoora, the servant. He was ordered by my grandfather to fire into the air--not at the people trying to abduct me, because that is against Jainism, but you are allowed to fire into the air to frighten them. Of course my grandmother had whispered in Bhoora's ear, "Don't bother about what my husband says. First you can fire into the air, but if it doesn't work, remember: if you don't shoot the people I will shoot you." And she was a really good shot. I have seen her shoot and she was always accurate to the minutest point--she did not miss much.

Nani was very exact as far as details are concerned. She was always to the point, never around it. There are some people who go around and around and around: you have to figure out what they really want. That was not her way; she was exact, mathematically exact. She told Bhoora, "Remember, if you come home without him just to report he has been stolen, I will shoot you immediately." I knew, Bhoora knew, my grandfather knew, because although she said it into Bhoora's ear, it was not a whisper; it was loud enough to be heard by the whole village. She meant it. She always meant business.

My grandfather looked the other way. I could not resist; I laughed loudly and said, "Why are you looking the other way? You heard her. If you are a real Jaina, tell Bhoora not to shoot anybody."

But before my grandfather could say anything, my Nani said, "I have told Bhoora on your behalf too, so you keep quiet." She was such a woman that she would even have shot my grandfather. I knew her--I don't mean literally, but metaphorically, and that is more dangerous than literally. So he kept quiet.

Twice I was almost abducted. Once my horse brought me home, and once Bhoora had to fire the gun, of course into the air. Perhaps if there had been a need he would have fired at the person who was trying to abduct me. But there was no need, so he saved himself and also my grandfather's religion.

Since then, it is strange...it seems very, very strange to me because I have been absolutely harmless to everybody, yet I have been in danger many times. Many attempts have been made on my life. I have always wondered, since life will end by itself sooner or later, why anybody should be interested to put an end to it in the middle. What purpose can it serve? If I could be convinced of that purpose I can stop breathing this very moment....

But when she had said to Bhoora, "If anyone touches my child, you are not just to fire into the air because we believe in Jainism.... That belief is good, but only in the temple. In the marketplace we have to behave in the way of the world, and the world is not Jaina. How can we behave according to our philosophy?"

I can see her crystal-clear logic. If you are talking to a man who does not understand English, you cannot speak to him in English. If you speak to him in his own language then there is more possibility of communication. Philosophies are languages; let that be clearly noted. Philosophies don't mean anything at all--they are languages. And the moment I heard my grandmother say to Bhoora, "When a dakait tries to steal my child, speak the language he understands, forget all about Jainism"--in that moment I understood. Although it was not so clear to me as it became later on, it must have been clear to Bhoora. My grandfather certainly understood the situation because he closed his eyes and started repeating his mantra: *"Namo arihantanam namo...namo siddhanam namo...."*

I laughed, my grandmother giggled; Bhoora, of course, only smiled. But everybody understood the situation--and she was right, as always....

My grandmother had the same quality of being always right. She said to Bhoora, "Do you think these dakaits believe in Jainism? And that old fool..." she indicated my grandfather who was repeating his mantra. She then said, "That old fool has only told you to fire into the air because we should not kill. Let him repeat his mantra. Who is telling him to kill? You are not a Jaina, are you?"

I knew instinctively at that moment that if Bhoora was a Jaina he would lose his job. I had never bothered before whether Bhoora was a Jaina or not. For the first time I became concerned about the poor man, and started praying. I did not know to whom, because Jainas don't believe in any God. I was never indoctrinated into any belief, but still I started saying within myself, "God, if you are there, save this poor man's job." Do you see the point? Even then I said, "*If* you are there...." I cannot lie even in such a situation.

But mercifully Bhoora was not a Jaina. He said, "I am not a Jaina so I don't care."

My Nani said, "Then remember what I have told you, not what that old fool has said."

In fact she always used to use that term for my grandfather: "that old fool". But that "old fool" is dead. My mother...my grandmother is dead. Excuse me, again I said "my mother." I really cannot believe she was not my mother and only my grandmother...

When she spoke to Bhoora I knew she meant it. Bhoora knew she meant it too. When my grandfather started the mantra, I knew he also understood that she meant business.

Twice I was attacked--and to me it was a joy, an adventure. In fact, deep down I wanted to know what it meant to be abducted. That has always been my characteristic, you can call it my character. It is a quality I rejoice in. I used to go on my horse to the woods which belonged to us. My grandfather promised that all that belonged to him would be willed to me, and he was true to his word. He never gave a single *pai* to anybody else.

He had thousands of acres of land. Of course, in those days it didn't have any value. But value is not my concern--it was so beautiful: those tall trees, and a great lake, and in summer when the mangoes became ripe it was so fragrant. I used to go there on my horse so often that the horse became accustomed to my path....

I used to go on my horse, and seeing those horses in Princess Diana's wedding procession I could not believe that England could have such beautiful horses....

All those people, and I could only love the horses! They were the real people. What joy! What steps! What dance! Just sheer celebration. I immediately remembered my own horse, and those days...their fragrance is there still. I can see the lake, and myself as a child on the horse in the woods. It is strange--I can smell the mangoes, the neem trees, the pines, and I can also smell my horse.

It is good that I was not allergic to smell in those days, or, who knows, I may have been allergic but unaware of it. It is a strange coincidence that the year of my enlightenment was also the year of my becoming allergic. *glimps10*

(6) Osho argues with Nana's guru

Jainism is the most ascetic religion in the world, or in other words the most masochistic and sadistic. Jaina monks torture themselves so much that one wonders if they are insane. They are not. They are businessmen, and the followers of the Jaina monks are all businessmen. It is strange, the whole Jaina community consists only of businessmen--but not really strange because the religion itself is basically motivated for profit in the other world. The Jaina tortures himself in order to gain something in the other world which he knows he cannot attain in this.

I must have been about four or five years old when I saw the first naked Jaina monk being invited into my grandmother's house. I could not resist laughing. My grandfather told me, "Keep quiet! I know you are a nuisance. I can forgive you when you are a pain in the neck to the neighbors, but I cannot forgive you if you try to be mischievous with my guru. He is my master; he initiated me into the inner secrets of religion."

I said, "I am not concerned about the inner secrets, I am concerned about the outer secrets that he is showing so clearly. Why is he naked? Can't he at least wear short pants?"

Even my grandfather laughed. He said, "You don't understand."

I said, "Okay, I will ask him myself." I then asked my grandmother, "Can I ask a few questions to this utterly insane man who comes naked in front of ladies and gentlemen?"

My grandmother laughed and said, "Go ahead, and don't take any notice of what your grandfather says. I allow you. If he says anything just indicate towards me and I will put him right."

She was really a beautiful woman, courageous, ready to give freedom without any limits. She did not even ask me what I was going to ask. She simply said, "Go ahead...."

All the villagers had assembled for the *darshan* of the Jaina monk. In the middle of the so-called sermon I stood up. That was forty or so years ago, and since then I have been fighting these idiots continuously. That day a war began which is only going to end when I am no more. Perhaps it may not end even then; my people may continue it.

I asked simple questions that he could not answer. I was puzzled. My grandfather was ashamed. My grandmother patted me on the back and said, "Great! You did it! I knew you were able to."

What had I asked?--just simple questions. I had asked, "Why don't you want to be born again?" That's a very simple question in Jainism, because Jainism is nothing but an effort not to be born again. It is the whole science of preventing rebirth. So I asked him the basic question, "Don't you ever want to be born again?"

He said, "No, never."

Then I asked, "Why don't you commit suicide? Why are you still breathing? Why eat? Why drink water? Just disappear, commit suicide. Why make so much fuss over a simple thing?" He was not more than forty years of age.... I said to him, "If you continue in this way, you may have to continue for another forty years or even more." It is a scientific fact that people who eat less live longer....

So I said to the monk--I did not know these facts then--"If you don't want to be born again, why are you living? Just to die? Then why not commit suicide?" I don't think anybody had ever asked him such a question. In polite society nobody ever asks a real question, and the question of suicide is the most real of all.

Marcel says: Suicide is the only real philosophical question. I had no idea of Marcel then. Perhaps at that time there was no Marcel, and his book had not been written yet. But this is what I said to the Jaina monk: "If you don't want to be born again, which you say is your desire, then why do you live? For what? Commit suicide! I can show you a way. Although I don't know much about the ways of the world, as far as suicide is concerned I can give you some advice. You can jump off the hill at the side of the village, or you can jump into the river."

The river was three miles away from the village, and so deep and so vast that to swim across it was such a joy for me. Many times while swimming across the river I would think it was the end and I would not be able to reach the other shore. It was so wide, particularly in the rainy season, miles wide. It looked almost like an ocean. In the rainy season one could not even see the other shore. When it was in full flood, that was when I would jump in, either to die or to reach the other shore. The greater probability was that I would never reach the other shore.

I told the Jaina monk, "In the rainy season you can jump into the river with me. We can keep company for a little while, then you can die, and I will reach the other shore. I can swim well enough."

He looked at me so fiercely, so full of anger, that I had to tell him, "Remember, you will have to be born again because you are still full of anger. This is not the way to get rid of the world of worries. Why are you looking at me so angrily? Answer my question in a peaceful and

silent way. Answer joyously! If you cannot answer, simply say, 'I don't know.' But don't be angry."

The man said, "Suicide is a sin. I cannot commit suicide. But I want never to be born again. I will achieve that state by slowly renouncing everything that I possess."

I said, "Please show me something that you possess because, as far as I can see you are naked and you don't possess anything. What possessions do you have?"

My grandfather tried to stop me. I pointed towards my grandmother and then said to him, "Remember, I asked permission of Nani, and now nobody can prevent me, not even you. I spoke to her about you because I was worried that if I interrupted your guru and his rubbishy, so-called sermon, you would be angry with me. She said to 'Just point towards me, that's all. Don't be worried: just a look from me and he will become silent.'" And strange...it was true! He became silent, even without a look from my Nani.

Later on my Nani and I both laughed. I said to her, "He did not even look at you."

She said, "He could not, because he must have been afraid that I would say 'Shut up! Don't interfere with the child.' So he avoided me. The only way to avoid me was to not interfere with you."

In fact he closed his eyes as if he was meditating. I said to him, "Nana, great! You are angry, boiling, there is fire within you, yet you sit with closed eyes as if you are meditating. Your guru is angry because my questions are annoying him. You are angry because your guru is not capable of answering. But I say, this man who is sermonizing here is just an imbecile." And I was not more than four or five years old.

From that time on that has remained my language. I immediately recognize the idiot wherever he is, whoever he is. Nobody can escape my x-ray eyes. I can immediately see any retardedness, or anything else whatsoever. *glimps07*

I have been talking about an incident that is absolutely important in order to understand my life and its workings...and it is still alive for me.

By the way, I was saying I can still remember, but the word 'remember' is not right. I can still see the whole incident happening. Of course I was just a young child, but that does not mean that what I said is not to be taken seriously. In fact it is the only serious thing that I have ever talked about: suicide.

To a Westerner it may seem a little rude to ask a monk--who is almost like a pope to the Jainas--such a question: "Why don't you commit suicide?" But be kind to me. Let me explain before you conclude, or stop listening to me.

Jainism is the only religion in the world which respects suicide. Now it is your turn to be surprised. Of course they do not call it suicide; they give it a beautiful metaphysical name,

santhara. I am against it, particularly the way it is done. It is very violent and cruel. It is strange that a religion which believes in nonviolence should preach *santhara*, suicide. You can call it metaphysical suicide, but after all, suicide is suicide; the name does not matter. What matters is that the man is no longer alive.

Why am I against it? I am not against the right of man to commit suicide. No, it should be one of the basic human rights. If I don't want to live, who has the right to force me to live? If I myself want to disappear, then all that others can do is to make it as comfortable as possible. Note it: one day I would like to disappear. I cannot live forever....

...I am not against the Jaina attitude to suicide, but the method...their method is not to eat anything. It takes almost ninety days for the poor man to die. It is torture. You cannot improve on it....

Jaina monks and their masochistic practices. They are superb! They never cut their hair, they pull it out with their hands. Look what a great idea!

Every year the Jaina monk pulls out his hair, beard and mustache, and all hair on the body, just with his bare hands! They are against any technology--and they call it logic, going to the very logical end of a thing. If you use a razor, that is technology; did you know that? Have you ever considered a razor a technological thing? Even so-called ecologists go on shaving their beards without knowing that they are committing a crime against nature.

Jaina monks pull out their hair--and not privately, because they do not have any privacy. Part of their masochism is not to have any privacy, to be utterly public. They pull their hair out while standing naked in the marketplace. The crowds, of course, cheer and applaud. And Jainas, although they feel great sympathy--you can even see tears in their eyes--unconsciously they also enjoy it, and without needing a ticket. I abhor it. I am averse to all such practices.

The idea of committing *santhara*, suicide, by not eating or drinking, is nothing but a very long process of self-torture. I cannot support it. But I am absolutely in support of the idea of the freedom to die. I consider it a birthright, and sooner or later every constitution in the world will contain it, will have to have it as the most basic birthright--the right to die. It is not a crime.

But to torture anybody, including yourself, is a crime. With this you will be able to understand that I was not being rude, I was asking a very relevant question. On that day I began a lifelong struggle against all kinds of stupidities, nonsense, superstitions--in short, religious bullshit. Bullshit is such a beautiful word. It says so much, in short.

That day I began my life as a rebel, and I will continue to be a rebel to my very last breath--or even after it, who knows....

That day was significant, historically significant. I have always remembered that day along with the day when Jesus argued with the rabbis in the temple. He was a little older than I

was, perhaps eight or nine years older. The way he argued determined the whole course of his life.

I don't remember the name of the Jaina monk; perhaps his name was Shanti Sagar, meaning "ocean of bliss." He certainly was not that. That is why I have forgotten even his name. He was just a dirty puddle, not an ocean of bliss or peace or silence. And he was certainly not a man of silence, because he became very angry.

Shanti can mean many things. It may mean peace, it may mean silence; those are the two basic meanings. Both were missing in him. He was neither peaceful nor silent, not at all. Nor could you say that he was without any turmoil in him because he became so angry that he shouted at me to sit down.

I said, "Nobody can tell me to sit down in my own house. I can tell you to get out, but you cannot tell me to sit down. But I will not tell you to get out because I have a few more questions. Please don't be angry. Remember your name, Shanti Sagar--ocean of peace and silence. You could at least be a little pool. And don't be disturbed by a little child."

Without bothering whether he was silent or not, I asked my grandmother, who was by now all laughter, "What do you say, Nani? Should I ask him more questions, or tell him to get out of our house?"

I did not ask my grandfather of course, because this man was his guru. My Nani said, "You can ask whatsoever you want to, and if he cannot answer, the door is open, he can get out."

That was the woman I loved. That was the woman who made me a rebel. Even my grandfather was shocked that she supported me in such a way. That so-called Shanti Sagar immediately became silent the moment he saw that my grandmother supported me. Not only her, the villagers were immediately on my side. The poor Jaina monk was left absolutely alone.

I asked him a few more questions. I asked, "You have said, 'Don't believe anything unless you have experienced it yourself.' I see the truth in that, hence this question...."

Jainas believe there are seven hells. Up to the sixth there is a possibility of coming back, but the seventh is eternal. Perhaps the seventh is the Christian hell, because there too, once you are in it you are in it forever. I continued, "You referred to seven hells, so the question arises, have you visited the seventh? If you have, then you could not be here. If you have not, on what authority do you say that it exists? You should say that there are only six hells, not seven. Now please be correct: say that there are only six hells, or if you want to insist on seven, then prove to me that at least one man, Shanti Sagar, has come back from the seventh hell."

He was dumbfounded. He could not believe that a child could ask such a question. Today, I too cannot believe it! How could I ask such a question? The only answer I can give is that I was uneducated, and utterly without any knowledge. Knowledge makes you very cunning. I

was not cunning. I simply asked the question which any child could have asked if he were not educated. Education is the greatest crime man has committed against poor children. Perhaps the last liberation in the world will be the liberation of children.

I was innocent, utterly unknowledgeable. I could not read or write, not even count beyond my fingers. Even today, when I have to count anything I start with my fingers, and if I miss a finger I get mixed up.

He could not answer. My grandmother stood up and said, "You have to answer the question. Don't think that only a child is asking; I am also asking and I am your hostess."

Now again I have to introduce you to a Jaina convention. When a Jaina monk comes to a family to receive his food, after taking his meal, as a blessing to the family, he gives a sermon. The sermon is addressed to the hostess. My grandmother said, "I am your hostess today, and I also am asking the same question. Have you visited the seventh hell? If not, say truthfully that you have not, but then you cannot say there are seven hells."

The monk became so puzzled and confused--more so by being confronted by a beautiful woman--that he started to leave. My Nani shouted, "Stop! Don't leave! Who is going to answer my child's question? And he still has a few more to ask. What kind of man are you, escaping from a child's questions!"

The man stopped. I said to him, "I drop the second question, because the monk cannot answer it. He has not answered the first question either, so I will ask him the third; perhaps he may be able to answer that."

He looked at me. I said, "If you want to look at me, look into my eyes." There was great silence, just as it is here. Nobody said a word. The monk lowered his eyes, and I then said, "Then I don't want to ask. My first two questions are unanswered, and the third is not asked because I don't want a guest of the house to be ashamed. I withdraw." And I really withdrew from the gathering, and I was so happy when my grandmother followed me.

The monk was given his farewell by my grandfather, but as soon as he had left, my grandfather rushed back into the house and asked my grandmother, "Are you mad? First you supported this boy who is a born troublemaker, then you went with him without even saying goodbye to my master."

My grandmother said, "He is not my master, so I don't care a bit. Moreover what you think to be a born troublemaker is the seed. Nobody knows what will come out of it."

I know now what has come out of it. Unless one is a born troublemaker one cannot become a buddha. And I am not only a buddha, as Gautam the Buddha; that is too traditional. I am Zorba the Buddha. I am a meeting of the East and the West. In fact, I do not divide East and West, higher and lower, man and woman, good and bad, God and the devil. No! A thousand times no! I don't divide. I join together all that has been divided up to now. That is my work.

That day is immensely significant in order to understand what happened during my whole life, because unless you understand the seed, you will miss the tree and the flowering, and perhaps the moon through the branches.

From that very day I have always been against everything masochistic. Of course I came to know the word much later, but the word does not matter. I have been against all that is ascetic; even that word was not known to me in those days, but I could smell something foul. You know I am allergic to all kinds of self-torture. I want every human being to live to the fullest; minimum is not my way. Live to the maximum, or if you can go beyond the maximum, then fantastic. Go! Don't wait! And don't waste time waiting for Godot....

...I am not against the idea of ending life. If one decides to end it, then of course it is his right. But I am certainly against making it a long torture. When this Shanti Sagar died, he took one hundred and ten days of not eating. A man is capable, if he is ordinarily healthy, of easily lasting ninety days without food. If he is extraordinarily healthy then he can survive longer.

So remember, I was not rude to the man. In that context my question was absolutely correct, perhaps more so because he could not answer it. And, strange to tell you today, that was the beginning not only of my questioning, but also the beginning of people not answering. Nobody has answered any of my questions in these last forty-five years. I have met many so-called spiritual people, but nobody has ever answered any of my questions. In a way that day determined my whole flavor, my whole life.

Shanti Sagar left very annoyed, but I was immensely happy, and I did not hide it from my grandfather. I told him, "Nana, he may have left annoyed, but I am feeling absolutely correct. Your guru was just mediocre. You should choose someone of a little more worth."

Even he laughed and said, "Perhaps you are right, but now at my age to change my guru will not be very practical." He asked my Nani, "What do you think?"

My Nani, as ever true to her spirit, said, "It is never too late to change. If you see what you have chosen is not right, change it. In fact, be quick, because you are getting old. Don't say, 'I am old, so I cannot change.' A young man can afford not to change, but not an old man, and you are old enough."

And only a few years later he died, but he could not gather the courage to change his guru. He continued in the same old pattern. My grandmother used to poke him saying, "When are you going to change your guru and your methods?"

He would say, "Yes, I will, I will."

One day my grandmother said, "Stop all this nonsense! Nobody ever changes unless one changes right now. Don't say 'I will, I will.' Either change or don't change, but be clear."

That woman could have become a tremendously powerful force. She was not meant to be just a housewife. She was not meant to live in that small village. The whole world should

have known about her. Perhaps I am her vehicle; perhaps she has poured herself into me. She loved me so deeply that I have never considered my real mother to be my real mother. I always consider my Nani to be my real mother.

Whenever I had to confess anything, any wrong that I had done to somebody, I could only confess it to her, nobody else. She was my trust. I could confide anything to her because I have come to realize one thing, and that is: she was capable of understanding....

...That moment in my life, asking the Jaina monk strange, irritating, annoying questions, I don't consider that I did anything wrong. Perhaps I helped him. Perhaps one day he will understand. If he had had courage he would have understood even that day, but he was a coward--he escaped. And since then, this has been my experience: the so-called mahatmas and saints are all cowards. I have never come across a single mahatma--Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, Buddhist--who can be said to be really a rebellious spirit. Unless one is rebellious one is not religious. Rebellion is the very foundation of religion. *glimps08*

I was telling you of the incident that happened between me and the Jaina monk. It was not the end of that story, because that next day he had to come again to beg for his food from my grandfather's house.

It will be difficult for you to understand why he had to come again when he had left our house in such anger. I have to explain the context to you. A Jaina monk cannot take food from anybody except another Jaina, and unfortunately for him, we were the only Jaina family in that small village. He could not beg elsewhere for his food, although he would have liked to, but it was against his discipline. So, in spite of himself, he came again.

I and my Nani were both waiting upstairs, watching from the window because we knew he had to come. My Nani said to me, "Look, he is coming. Now, what are you going to ask him today?"

I said, "I don't know. First, let him at least eat, and then conventionally he is bound to address the family and the people who have gathered." After each meal, a Jaina monk delivers a sermon of thanks. "Then don't be worried," I told her, "I will find something or other to ask. First let him speak."

He was very cautious in speaking, and very brief, which was unusual. But whether you speak or not, if someone wants to question you, he can. He can question your silence. The monk was speaking about the beauty of existence, thinking perhaps that it could not create any trouble, but it did.

I stood up. My Nani was laughing at the back of the room--I can still hear her laughter. I asked him, "Who created this beautiful universe?"

Jainas do not believe in God. It is difficult for the Western Christian mind to even comprehend a religion that does not believe in God. Jainism is far superior to Christianity; at least it does not believe in God, and the Holy Ghost, and the whole nonsense that follows. Jainism is,

believe me or not, an atheistic religion--because to be atheist and yet religious seems to be contradictory, a contradiction in terms. Jainism is pure ethics, pure morality, with no God. So when I asked the Jaina monk, "Who created this beauty?" obviously, as I knew he would, he answered, "Nobody."

That was what I was waiting for. I then said, "Can such beauty be created by no one?"

He said, "Please don't misunderstand me...." This time he had come prepared; he looked more together. "Please don't misunderstand me," he said, "I am not saying that no one is someone."...

I said to the Jaina monk, "I know that no one is no one, but you talk so beautifully, so praisingly of existence that it shocks me, because Jainas are not supposed to do that. It seems that because of yesterday's experience you have changed your tactics. You can change your tactics but you cannot change me. I still ask, if no one created the universe how did it come to be?"

He looked here and there; all were silent except for my Nani, who was laughing loudly. The monk asked me, "Do you know how it came to be?"

I said, "It has always been there; there is no need for it to come." I can confirm that sentence after forty-five years, after enlightenment and no-enlightenment, after having read so much and having forgotten it all, after knowing that which is, and--put it in capitals--IGNORING IT. I can still say the same as that young child: the universe has always been there; there is no need for it to have been created or to have come from somewhere--it simply is.

The Jaina monk did not turn up on the third day. He escaped from our village to the next where there was another Jaina family. But I must pay homage to him: without knowing it he started a small child on the journey towards truth.

Since then, how many people have I asked the same question, and found the same ignorance facing me--great pundits, knowledgeable people, great mahatmas worshipped by thousands, and yet not able to answer a simple question put by a child.

In fact, no real question has ever been answered, and I predict that no real question will ever be answered, because when you come to a real question, the only answer is silence. Not the stupid silence of a pundit, a monk or a mahatma, but your own silence. Not the silence of the other, but the silence that grows within you. Except that, there is no answer. And that silence that grows within is an answer to you, and to those who merge with your silence with love; otherwise it is not an answer to anyone except you....

When the monk had disappeared from that village we laughed continuously for days, particularly my Nani and I. I cannot believe how childlike she was! At that time she must have been nearly fifty, but her spirit was as if she had never grown older than a child. She laughed with me and said, "You did well."

Even now I can still see the back of the escaping monk. Jaina monks are not beautiful people; they cannot be, their whole approach is ugly, just ugly. Even his back was ugly. I have always loved the beautiful wherever it is found--in the stars, in a human body, in flowers, or in the flight of a bird...wherever. I am an unashamed worshipper of the beautiful, because I cannot see how one can know truth if one cannot love beauty. Beauty is the way to truth. And the way and the goal are not different: the way itself ultimately turns into the goal. The first step is also the last.

That encounter--yes, that's the right word--that encounter with the Jaina mystic began thousands of other encounters; Jaina, Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, and I was ready to do anything just to have a good argument....

...I was saying that my first encounter with the naked Jaina monk started a long, long series of encounters with many so-called monks--bullshitters. They all suffer from intellectuality, and I was born to bring them down to earth. But it is almost impossible to bring them to their senses. Perhaps they don't want to because they are afraid. Perhaps not to have sensibility or intelligence is very advantageous to them.

They are respected as holy men; to me they are only holy cow dung. One thing about cow dung is good: it does not smell. I remind you of that because I am allergic to smells. Cow dung has this one good quality, it is nonallergic, nonallergenic. *glimps09*

(7) Death of Osho's grandfather, Nana

You are asking: *What was that event that made you turn toward the spiritual? What was that miracle?*

There has been no such event. It happens many times that some event occurs and a person takes a turn in life. It also happens that as a result of the collective effect of many events, a person's life is changed. In my life there has been no such event that can be singled out as having caused such a change. However, there have been many events whose collective impact may have caused a turning point, but when this happened cannot be determined. Furthermore, I do not think I ever "turned to the spiritual." I was already in that direction. I do not remember any day when I have not been thinking about the spiritual. From my very first memories, I have been thinking about it.

Many events have occurred in which the collective effect is to be considered. I remember no single event that is so outstanding. Ordinarily, just one excuse sometimes diverts the mind suddenly. However, I believe that the mind diverted toward something by a single event can revert back also. But if the turning is the collective result of many events, then there is no reverting back because that turning is deeper and has entered into the many layers of one's

personality. Just as by a single push you can be forced in a certain direction, so also can another push in the opposite direction cause you to return back.

Again, turning by only a single push is a type of reaction. It is possible, but you are not fully ready for it and you simply become diverted. When the effect of that push vanishes, you can return back. But if every moment of life slowly and steadily brings you to a state where even you yourself are not able to decide how you came there, then returning back out of reaction is not possible--because then that condition becomes even part of your breathing, so to speak.

However, one memory in my life which is worth remembering is that of death. It is difficult to tell what I might have thought on that day. My early childhood passed at the house of my maternal grandparents and I had great love for them.... I came in touch with my father and mother only after the death of my maternal grandfather. His passing away and the manner in which it happened became the first valuable memory for me because I had loved only them and received love only from them. His passing away was very strange. The village in which they were staying was about thirty-two miles away from any town. Neither was there any doctor nor any *vaidya*, one who practices ayurvedic medicine.

In the very first attack of death upon my grandfather, he lost his speech. For twenty-four hours we waited in that village for something to happen. However, there was no improvement. I remember a struggle on his part in an attempt to say something, but he could not speak. He wanted to tell something, but could not tell it. Therefore, we had to take him toward the town of Gadarwara* in a bullock cart. Slowly, one after the other, his senses were giving way. He did not die all at once, but slowly and painfully. First his speech stopped, then his hearing. Then he closed his eyes as well. In the bullock cart, I was watching everything closely, and there was a long distance of thirty-two miles to travel.

Whatsoever was happening seemed beyond my understanding then. This was the first death witnessed by me, and I did not even understand that he was dying. But slowly all his senses were giving way and he became unconscious. While we were still near the town, he was already half dead. His breathing still continued, but everything else was lost. After that he did not resume consciousness, but for three days he continued breathing. He died unconsciously.

This slow losing of his senses and his final dying became very deeply engraved in my memory. It was he with whom I had my deepest relationship. For me, he was the only love object, and because of his death, perhaps, I have not been able to feel attached to anyone else so much. Since then, I have been alone. *known05*

*Note: where Osho's parents lived

Separation has its own beauty, as does meeting. I don't see that there is anything wrong with separation. Separation has its own poetry; one just has to learn its language, and one has to live it in its depth. Then out of sadness itself comes a new kind of joy...which looks almost impossible, but it happens. I have known it. That's what I was talking about this morning. I was talking about the death of my Nana. It was a total separation. We will not meet again, yet

there was a beauty in it, and he made it more beautiful by repeating the mantra. He made it more prayerful...it became fragrant.

He was old and dying, perhaps from a severe heart attack. We were not aware of it because the village had no doctor, not even a pharmacist, no medicine. So we didn't know the cause of his death, but I think it was a severe heart attack.

I asked him in his ear, "Nana, have you something to say to me before you depart? Any last words? Or do you want to give me something to remember you by forever?"

He took off his ring and put it in my hand. That ring is with some sannyasin now; I gave it to someone. But that ring was always a mystery. His whole life he would not allow anybody to see what was in it, yet again and again he used to look into it. That ring had a glass window on both sides that you could look through. On top was a diamond; on each of its sides there was a glass window.

He had not allowed anybody to see what it was that he used to look at through the window. Inside there was a statue of Mahavira, the Jaina tirthankara; a really beautiful image, and very small. It must have been a small picture of Mahavira inside, and those two windows were magnifying glasses. They magnified it and it looked really huge. It was of no use to me because, I am sorry to say, even though I have tried my best I have never been able to love Mahavira as much as I love Buddha, although they were contemporaries....

I was telling you that my grandfather, before he died, gave me his most cherished thing--a statue of Mahavira hidden behind a diamond in a ring. With tears in his eyes he said, "I don't have anything else to give you because all that I have will be taken away from you too, just as it has been taken away from me. I can only give you my love for the one who has known himself."

Although I did not keep his ring, I have fulfilled his desire. I have known the one, and I have known it in myself. In a ring what does it matter? But the poor old man, he loved his master, Mahavira, and he gave his love to me. I respect his love for his master, and for me. The last words on his lips were, "Don't be worried, because I am not dying."

We all waited to see if he was going to say something else, but that was all. His eyes closed and he was no more.

I still remember that silence. The bullock cart was passing through a river bed. I exactly remember each detail. I didn't say anything because I didn't want to disturb my grandmother. She did not say a thing. A few moments passed, then I became a little worried about her and said, "Say something; don't be so quiet, it is unbearable."

Can you believe it, she sang a song! That's how I learned that death has to be celebrated. She sang the same song she had sung when she was in love with my grandfather for the first time. *glimps06*

I was telling you that my grandfather's death was my first encounter with death. Yes, an encounter and something more; not just an encounter, otherwise I would have missed the real meaning of it. I saw the death, and something more that was not dying, that was floating above it, escaping from the body...the elements. That encounter determined my whole course of life. It gave me a direction, or rather a dimension, that was not known to me before.

I had heard of other people's deaths, but only heard. I had not seen, and even if I had seen, they did not mean anything to me.

Unless you love someone and he then dies, you cannot really encounter death. Let that be underlined:

Death can only be encountered in the death of the loved one.

When love plus death surrounds you, there is a transformation, an immense mutation, as if a new being is born. You are never the same again. But people do not love, and because they do not love they can't experience death the way I experienced it. Without love, death does not give you the keys to existence. With love, it hands over to you the keys to all that is.

My first experience of death was not a simple encounter. It was complex in many ways. The man I had loved was dying. I had known him as my father. He had raised me with absolute freedom, no inhibitions, no suppressions, and no commandments....

Love with freedom--if you have it, you are a king or a queen. That is the real kingdom of God--love with freedom. Love gives you the roots into the earth, and freedom gives you the wings.

My grandfather gave me both. He gave his love to me, more than he ever had given to either my mother or even my grandmother; and he gave me freedom, which is the greatest gift. As he was dying he gave me his ring, and with a tear in his eye told me, "I don't have anything else to give you."

I said, "Nana, you have already given me the most precious gift."

He opened his eyes and said, "What is that?"

I laughed and said, "Have you forgotten? You have given me your love and you have given me freedom. I think no child ever had such freedom as you gave to me. What more do I need? What more can you give? I am thankful. You can die peacefully." Since then I have seen many people die, but to die peacefully is really difficult. I have only seen five people die peacefully: the first was my grandfather; the second was my servant Bhoora; the third was my Nani; the fourth, my father, and the fifth was Vimalkirti*. *glimps13*

*Note: Vimalkirti became a disciple of Osho, see Part VII

Tvadiyam vastu Govinda, tubhyam eva samarpayet: "My Lord, this life you have given to me, I surrender it back to you with my thanks." Those were the dying words of my grandfather,

although he never believed in God and was not a Hindu. This sentence, this sutra, is a Hindu sutra--but in India things are mixed up, particularly good things. Before he died, among other things, he said one thing again and again: "Stop the wheel."

I could not understand it at the time. If we stopped the wheel of the cart, and that was the only wheel there was, then how could we reach the hospital? When he repeated again and again, "Stop the wheel, the *chakra*," I asked my grandmother, "Has he gone mad?"

She laughed.

That was the thing I liked in that woman. Even though she knew, as I did, that death was so close...if even I knew, how could it be possible that she did not know? It was so apparent that just at any moment he would stop breathing, yet he was insisting on stopping the wheel. Still she laughed. I can see her laughing now.

She was not more than fifty at the most. But I have always observed a strange thing about women: the phony ones, who pretend to be beautiful, at the age of forty-five are the ugliest. You can go around the world and see what I am saying. With all their lipstick and makeup, and false eyebrows and whatnot...my God!

Even God did not think of these things when he created the world. At least it is not mentioned in the Bible that on the fifth day he created lipstick, and on the sixth day he created false eyebrows etcetera. At the age of forty-five, if the woman is really beautiful she comes to her peak. My observation is: man comes to his peak at the age of thirty-five, and woman at the age of forty-five. She is capable of living ten years longer than a man--and it is not unjust. Giving birth to children she suffers so much that a little bit of extra life, just to compensate, is perfectly okay.

My Nani was fifty, still at the peak of her beauty and youth. I have never forgotten that moment--it was such a moment! My grandfather was dying and asking us to stop the wheel. What nonsense! How could I stop the wheel? We had to reach the hospital, and without the wheel we would be lost in the forest. And my grandmother was laughing so loudly that even Bhoora, the servant, our driver, asked, of course from the outside, "What is going on? Why are you laughing?" Because I used to call her Nani, Bhoora also used to call her Nani, just out of respect for me. He then said, "Nani, my master is sick and you are laughing so loudly; what's the matter? And why is Raja so silent?"

Death, and my grandmother's laughter, both made me utterly silent, because I wanted to understand what was happening. Something was happening that I had never known before and I was not going to lose a single moment through any distraction.

My grandfather said, "Stop the wheel. Raja, can't you hear me? If I can hear your grandmother's laughter you must be able to hear me. I know she is a strange woman; I have never been able to understand her."

I said to him, "Nana, as far as I know she is the simplest woman I have seen, although I have not seen much yet."

But now to you I can say, I don't think there is any man on the earth, alive or dead, who has seen so much of women as I have. But just to console my dying grandfather I said to him, "Don't be worried about her laughter. I know her. She is not laughing at what you are saying, it is something else between us, a joke that I told her."

He said, "Okay. If it is a joke that you told her then it is perfectly okay for her to laugh. But what about the chakra, the wheel?"

Now I know, but at that time I was absolutely unacquainted with such terminology. The wheel represents the whole Indian obsession with the wheel of life and death. For thousands of years, millions of people have been doing only one thing: trying to stop the wheel. He was not talking about the wheel of the bullock cart--that was very easy to stop; in fact it was difficult to keep it moving.

There was no road--not only at that time, even now!...

...No roads existed then, and even today no railway line passes by that village. It is a really poor village, and when I was a child it was even poorer.

I could not understand at that moment why my Nana was so insistent. Perhaps the bullock cart--because there was no road--was making too much noise. Everything was rattling, and he was in agony, so naturally he wanted to stop the wheel. But my grandmother laughed. Now I know why she laughed. He was talking about the Indian obsession with life and death, symbolically called the wheel of life and death--and in short, the wheel--which goes on and on....

The whole of the *Mahabharata* is nothing but the Indian obsession written at length, voluminously, saying that man is born again and again and again, eternally.

That's why my grandfather was saying, "Stop the wheel." If I could have stopped the wheel I would have stopped it, not only for him but for everybody else in the world. Not only would I have stopped it, I would have destroyed it forever so that nobody could ever turn it again. But it is not in my hands.

But why this obsession?

I became aware of many things at that moment of his death. I will talk about everything that I became aware of in that moment, because that has determined my whole life. *glimps14*

Death is not the end but only the culmination of one's whole life, a climax. It is not that you are finished, but you are transported to another body. That is what the Easterners call "the wheel." It goes on turning and turning. Yes, it can be stopped, but the way to stop it is not when you are dying.

That is one of the lessons, the greatest lesson I learned from my grandfather's death. He was crying, with tears in his eyes, and asking us to stop the wheel. We were at a loss what to do: how to stop the wheel?

His wheel was his wheel; it was not even visible to us. It was his own consciousness, and only he could do it. Since he was asking us to stop it, it was obvious that he could not do it himself; hence the tears and his constant insistence on asking us again and again, as if we were deaf. We told him, "We have heard you, Nana, and we understand. Please be silent."

In that moment something great happened. I have never revealed it to anybody; perhaps before this moment was not the time. I was saying to him, "Please be silent"--the bullock cart was rattling on the rough, ugly road. It was not even a road, just a track, and he was insisting, "Stop the wheel, Raja, do you hear? Stop the wheel."

Again and again I told him, "Yes, I do hear you. I understand what you mean. You know that nobody except you can stop the wheel, so please be silent. I will try to help you."

My grandmother was amazed. She looked at me with such big, amazing eyes: what was I saying? How could I help?

I said, "Yes. Don't look so amazed. I have suddenly remembered one of my past lives. Seeing his death I have remembered one of my own deaths." That life and death happened in Tibet. That is the only country which knows, very scientifically, how to stop the wheel. Then I started chanting something.

Neither my grandmother could understand, nor my dying grandfather, nor my servant Bhoora, who was listening intently from the outside. And what is more, neither could I understand a single word of what I was chanting. It was only after twelve or thirteen years that I came to understand what it was. It took that much time to discover it. It was *Bardo Thodal*, a Tibetan ritual.

When a man dies in Tibet, they repeat a certain mantra. That mantra is called *bardo*. The mantra says to him, "Relax, be silent. Go to your center, just be there; don't leave it whatsoever happens to the body. Just be a witness. Let it happen, don't interfere. Remember, remember, remember that you are only a witness; that is your true nature. If you can die remembering, the wheel is stopped."

I repeated the *Bardo Thodal* for my dying grandfather without even knowing what I was doing. It was strange--not only that I repeated it, but also that he became utterly silent listening to it. Perhaps Tibetan was such a strange thing to hear. He may never have heard a single word in Tibetan before; he may not even have known that there was a country called Tibet. Even in his death he became utterly attentive and silent. The *bardo* worked although he could not understand it. Sometimes things you don't understand work; they work just because you don't understand....

I was repeating the *bardo* though I did not understand its meaning, nor did I know where it was coming from, because I had not read it yet. But when I repeated it just the shock of those strange words made my grandfather silent. He died in that silence.

To live in silence is beautiful, but to die in silence is far more beautiful, because death is like an Everest, the highest peak in the Himalayas. Although nobody taught me, I learned much in that moment of his silence. I saw myself repeating something absolutely strange. It shocked me to a new plane of being and pushed me into a new dimension. I started on a new search, a pilgrimage. *glimps15*

The moment my Nana died, my grandmother was still laughing the last flicker of her laughter. Then she controlled herself. She was certainly a woman who could control herself. But I was not impressed by her control, I was impressed by her laughter in the very face of death.

Again and again I asked her, "Nani, can you tell me why you laughed so loudly when death was so imminent? If even a child like me was aware of it, it is not possible that you were not aware."

She said, "I was aware, that is why I laughed. I laughed at the poor man trying to stop the wheel unnecessarily, because neither birth nor death mean anything in the ultimate sense."

I had to wait for the time when I could ask and argue with her. When I myself become enlightened, I thought, then I will ask her. And that's what I did. *glimps16*

That was my first encounter with death, and it was a beautiful encounter. It was not in any way ugly, as it more or less happens for almost every child around the world. Fortunately I was together with my dying grandfather for hours, and he died slowly. By and by, I could feel death happening to him, and I could see the great silence of it.

I was also fortunate that my Nani was present. Perhaps without her I may have missed the beauty of death, because love and death are so similar, perhaps the same. She loved me. She showered her love upon me, and death was there, slowly happening. A bullock cart...I can still hear its sound...the rattling of its wheels on the stones...Bhoora continuously shouting to the bullocks...the sound of his whip hitting them.... I can hear it all still. It is so deeply rooted in my experience that I don't think even my death will erase it. Even while dying I may again hear the sound of that bullock cart.

My Nani was holding my hand, and I was completely dazed, not knowing what was happening, utterly in the moment. My grandfather's head was in my lap. I held my hands on his chest, and slowly slowly, the breathing disappeared. When I felt that he was no longer breathing I said to my grandmother, "I'm sorry, Nani, but it seems that he is no longer breathing."

She said, "That's perfectly okay. You need not be worried. He has lived enough, there is no need to ask for more." She also told me, "Remember, because these are the moments not to be forgotten: never ask for more. What is, is enough." *glimps12*

Since the day my maternal grandfather died, death became a constant companion to me. I was only seven years old when he died. He died on my lap....

After that, death became a constant companion to me. That day I also died, because one thing became certain, that whether you live seven years or seventy years--he was seventy years--what does it matter, you have to die.

My grandfather was a rare man. I could not conceive him telling a lie, breaking a promise, even judging somebody as bad.

Such a good man, a beautiful man, simply died. What was the meaning of his life? That became a tortuous question to me--what was the meaning? What had he attained? For seventy years he lived the life of a good man; but what was the point of it all? It simply ended...not even a trace was left behind. His death made me immensely serious.

I was serious even before his death. By the age of four I started thinking of problems that people somehow manage to go on postponing to the very end. I don't believe in postponing. I started asking questions to my maternal grandfather and he would say, "These questions! Your whole life is there--there is no hurry--and you are too young."

I said, "I have seen young boys dying in the village: they had not asked these questions, they have died without finding the answer. Can you guarantee me that I will not die tomorrow or the day after tomorrow? Can you give me a guarantee that I will die only after I have found the answer?"

He said, "I cannot guarantee that, because death is not in my hands, nor is life in my hands."

"Then," I said, "You should not suggest to me any postponement. I want the answer now. If you know, then say that you know and give me the answer. If you don't know, then don't feel awkward in accepting your ignorance."

Soon he realized that with me there was no alternative. Either you had to say yes.... But it was not easy then; then you had to go into deeper details about it--and you could not deceive me. He started accepting his ignorance, that he didn't know.

I said, "You are very old, soon you will be dying What have you been doing for your whole life? At the moment of death you will have only ignorance in your hands and nothing else. And these are vital questions--I am not asking you any trivia.

"You go to the temple. I ask you why you go to the temple--have you found anything in the temple? You have been going your whole life, and you try to persuade me to come along with you to the temple." The temple was made by him. One day he accepted that the truth is "Because I have made the temple. If even I don't go there, then who is going to go there? But before you I accept it, that it is futile. I have been going there my whole life and I have not gained anything."

Then I said, "Try something else. Don't die with the question--die with the answer." But he died with the question.

The last time he spoke to me, almost ten hours before he died, he opened his eyes and he said, "You were right: postponing is not right. I am dying with all the questions with me. So remember, whatever I was suggesting to you was wrong. You were right, don't postpone. If a question arises, try to find the answer as quickly as possible." *person23*

Bhoora died just because he could not conceive of living in a world without his master. He simply died. He relaxed into death. He had come with us to my father's village because he had been driving the bullock cart. When for a few moments he heard nothing, no word from the inside of the covered cart, he asked me, "Beta"--it means son--"is everything okay?"

Again and again Bhoora asked, "Why this silence? Why is nobody speaking?" But he was the kind of man who would not look inside the curtain which divided him from us. How could he look inside when my grandmother was there? That was the trouble, he could not look. But again and again he asked, "What is the matter--why is everybody silent?"

I said, "There is nothing wrong. We are enjoying the silence. Nana wants us to be silent." That was a lie, because Nana was dead--but in a way it was true. He was silent; that was a message for us to be silent.

I finally said, "Bhoora, everything is okay; only Nana is gone."

He could not believe it. He said, "Then how can everything be okay? Without him I cannot live." And within twenty-four hours he died. Just as if a flower had closed...refusing to remain open in the sun and the moon, of his own accord. We tried everything to save him, because now we were in a bigger town, my father's town.

My father's town was, for India of course, just a small town. The population was only twenty thousand. It had a hospital and a school. We tried everything possible to save Bhoora. The doctor in the hospital was amazed because he could not believe that this man was Indian; he looked so European. He must have been a freak of biology, I don't know. Something must have gone right. As they say, "Something must have gone wrong," I have coined the phrase, "Something must have gone right"--why always wrong?

Bhoora was in shock because of his master's death. We had to lie to him until we got to the town. Only when we reached the town and the corpse was taken out of the bullock cart did Bhoora see what had happened. He then closed his eyes and never opened them again. He said, "I cannot see my master dead." And that was only a master-servant relationship. But there had arisen between them a certain intimacy, a certain closeness which is indefinable. He never opened his eyes again, that much I can vouch for. He lived only a few hours longer, and he went into a coma before dying.

Before my grandfather died, he had told my grandmother, "Take care of Bhoora. I know you will take care of Raja--I do not have to tell you that--but take care of Bhoora. He has served me as nobody else could."

I told the doctor, "Do you, can you, understand the kind of devotion that must have existed between these two men?"

The doctor asked me, "Is he a European?"

I said, "He looks like one."

The doctor said, "Don't be tricky. You are a child, only seven or eight years old, but very tricky. When I asked whether your grandfather was dead, you said no, and that was not true."

I said, "No, it was true: he is not dead. A man of such love cannot be dead. If love can be dead then there is no hope for the world. I cannot believe that a man who respected my freedom, a small child's freedom so much, is dead just because he cannot breathe. I cannot equate the two, not breathing and death."

The European doctor looked at me suspiciously and told my uncle, "This boy will either be a philosopher or else he will go mad." He was wrong: I am both together. There is no question of either/or. I am not Soren Kierkegaard; there is no question of either/or. But I wondered why he could not believe me...such a simple thing....

I could not understand why the doctor could not believe that my grandfather was not dead. I knew and he knew that as far as the body was concerned, it was finished; there was no quarrel about that. But there is something more than the body--in the body and yet not part of the body. Let me repeat it to emphasize it: in the body and yet not of the body. Love reveals it; freedom gives it wings to soar in the sky. *glimps13*

My grandfather had entrusted to Bhoora all the keys and all the affairs of the house and the land....

Many years later when I was again living in Bombay, Bhoora's son came to me and gave me the keys and said, "We have been waiting and waiting for you to come, but nobody came. We have taken care of the land and looked after the crops and put aside all the money."

I gave him the keys back and said to him, "Everything now belongs to you. The house, the crops and the money belong to you, they are yours. I am sorry that I did not know before, but none of us wanted to go back and feel the pain." *glimps03*

I was telling you about an astrologer who had promised to work on my life's birth chart. He died before he had done it, so his son had to prepare the chart, but he was also puzzled. He said, "It is almost certain that this child is going to die at the age of twenty-one. Every seven years he will have to face death." So my parents, my family, were always worried about my death. Whenever I would come to the end of a seven-year cycle, they would become afraid.

And he was right. At the age of seven I survived, but I had a deep experience of death--not of my own, but of the death of my maternal grandfather. And I was so much attached to him that his death appeared to be my own death.

In my own childish way I imitated his death. I would not eat for three days continuously, would not drink water, because I felt that if I did so it would be a betrayal. I loved him so much, he loved me so much, that when he was alive I was never allowed to go to my parents. I was with my maternal grandfather. He said, "When I die, only then can you go." He lived in a very small village, so I couldn't go to any school because there was no school. He would never leave me, but then the time came when he died. He was part and parcel of me. I had grown with his presence, his love.

When he died I felt that it would be a betrayal to eat. Now I didn't want to live. It was childish, but through it something very deep happened. For three days I remained lying down; I would not come out of the bed. I said, "Now that he is dead, I do not want to live." I survived, but those three days became a death experience. I died in a way, and I came to realize--now I can tell about it, though at that time it was just a vague experience--I came to feel that death is impossible. This was a feeling. *vbt24*

The facticity of aloneness took hold of me from the age of seven years on. Aloneness became my nature. His death freed me forever from all relationships. His death became for me the death of all attachments. Thereafter, I could not establish a bond of relationship with anyone. Whenever my relationship with anyone would begin to become intimate, that death stared at me. Therefore with whomsoever I experienced some attachment, I felt that if not today, tomorrow that person could also die.

Once a person becomes clearly aware of the certainty of death, then the possibility of attachment is lessened in the same proportion. In other words, our attachments are based on the forgetfulness of the fact of death. With whomsoever we love, we continue to believe that death is not unavoidable. That is why we speak of love as immortal. It is our tendency to believe that whomsoever we love will not die.

But for me love invariably became associated with death. This meant that I was not able to love without being aware of death. There can be friendship, there can be compassion, but no infatuation over anything could catch me. Very deeply did death touch me--and so intensely that the more I thought of it, the more and more clear did it become to me each day.

Thus, the madness of life did not affect me. Death stared at me before the thrust into life began. This event can be considered as the first which left a deep impact and influence on my mind. From that day onwards, every day, every moment, the awareness of life invariably became associated with the awareness of death. From then onwards, to be or not to be had the same value for me. At that tender age, loneliness seized me.

Sooner or later in life--in old age--loneliness seizes everyone. But it seized me before I knew what company meant. I may live with everyone, but whether I am in a crowd or a society, with a friend or an intimate, I am still alone. Nothing touches me; I remain untouched.

As that first feeling of loneliness became deeper and deeper, something new began to happen in life. At first that loneliness had made me only unhappy, but slowly it began changing into happiness--because it is a rule that when we become attached to anyone or anything, in one way or the other we turn from facing ourselves. Actually, the desire for attachment to someone or something is a device for escaping from one's own self. And as the other goes on becoming more and more important to us, to the very same extent he becomes the center for us and we become the periphery.

We continue to remain other-centered for the whole life. Then one's own self can never become the center. For me, the possibility of anyone else becoming my center was destroyed in the very first steps of my life. The first center that was formed broke down, and there was no other way but to revert back to my own self. I was, so to speak, thrown back to my own self. Slowly, that made me more and more happy. Afterwards I came to feel that this close observation of death at a tender age became a blessing in disguise for me. If such a death had occurred at a later age, perhaps I would have found other substitutes for my grandfather.

So the more unripe and innocent the mind is, the more difficult it becomes to replace a love object. The more clever, skillful, cunning and calculative the mind becomes, the more easy it becomes to replace or substitute another for the one lost. The more quickly you replace, the sooner you become free from the unhappiness derived from the first. But it was not possible for me to find a substitute on that very day when death occurred.

Children are not able to find a substitute easily. The place of the love object that is lost remains empty. The older you are the faster you can fill the emptiness, because then one can think. A gap in thought can be filled up quickly, but emotional emptiness cannot be quickly filled. A thought can persuade one faster, but the heart cannot persuade. And at a tender age when one is not capable of thinking but is capable only of feeling, the difficulty is greater.

Therefore, the other could not become important to me in the sense that it could save me from my own self. So I had to live with my own self only. At first this seemed to give me unhappiness, but slowly it began giving me the experience of happiness. Thereafter, I did not suffer any unhappiness.

The cause of unhappiness lies in our attaching ourselves to the other, in expectation from the other, in the hope of gaining happiness from the other. You never actually gain happiness, but the hope is always sustained. And whenever that hope gives way, frustration begins.

Thus, in the very first experience, I became so badly disappointed from the other that I did not try again. That direction was closed for me, and so thereafter I never became unhappy. Then a new type of happiness began to be experienced which can never come from the other. Happiness can never come from the other; what is created is only a hope for future happiness. Actually, only the shadow of happiness is received.

Exactly the reverse is the situation when encountering oneself for the first time. When encountering oneself, unhappiness is experienced in the beginning, but authentic happiness

progressively comes about as the encounter continues. On the contrary, encountering the other gives happiness in the beginning, but unhappiness is the end.

So, to me, being thrown upon oneself begins the journey toward the spiritual. How we become thrown back in this way is another matter. Life gives many opportunities for being thrown back to oneself. But the more clever we are, the quicker we are in rescuing ourselves from such an opportunity. At such moments we move out from ourselves.

If my wife dies, I am immediately in search, and then I marry another. If my friend is lost, I begin to search for another. I cannot leave any gap. By filling that gap, the opportunity I would have had to revert back to my own self is lost in a moment, along with its immense possibilities.

If I had become interested in the other, I would have lost the opportunity to journey toward the self. I became a sort of a stranger to others. Generally, it is at this tender age that we become related with the other, when we are admitted into society. That is the age when we are initiated, so to speak, by the society which wants to absorb us. But I have never been initiated into society. It just could not happen. Whenever I entered into the society, I entered as an individual and I remained aloof and separate like an island.

I do not remember that I ever cultivated any friendship, though there were many who wanted to be my friends. Many persons made friends with me, and they enjoyed making friendship with me because it was not possible to make me an enemy. But I do not recall that I have ever gone of my own accord to anyone in order to make any friend. If someone threw himself on me, it was a different matter. It is not that I never welcomed friendship. If someone made a friend of me, I wholeheartedly welcomed it. But even then I could not become a friend in the ordinary sense. I have always remained aloof.

In short, even while studying in school, I remained aloof. Neither with any of my teachers, nor with any fellow student, nor with any other, could I develop such a relationship as would drown me or break my being an island. Friends came and also stayed with me. I met many people as well; I had many friends. But from my side there was nothing that could make me dependent upon them or which would cause me to remember them.

It is very interesting to note that I do not remember anyone. It has never happened that I would sit pondering over someone with the feeling that if I would meet him it would be very pleasant. If someone does meet me, it makes me very happy, but I do not become unhappy due to not meeting someone. For the state of ultimate joy, I believe that only my grandfather's death was responsible. That death threw me back to myself permanently. I have not been able to revert back from the center. Due to this condition of being an outsider, a stranger, I have seen a new dimension of experience. It is a condition in which, although I am amidst everything, I continue to remain outside. *known05*